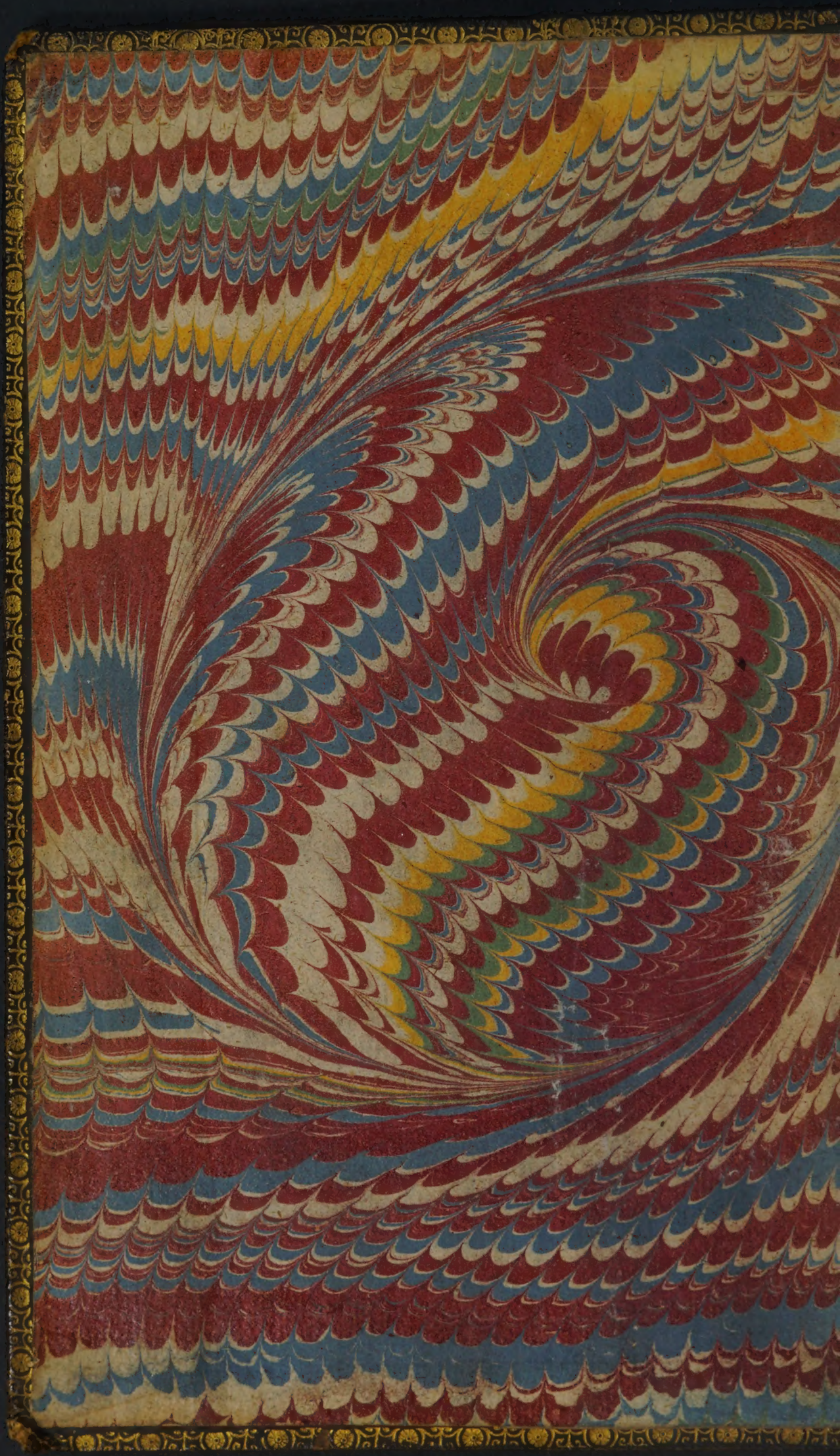

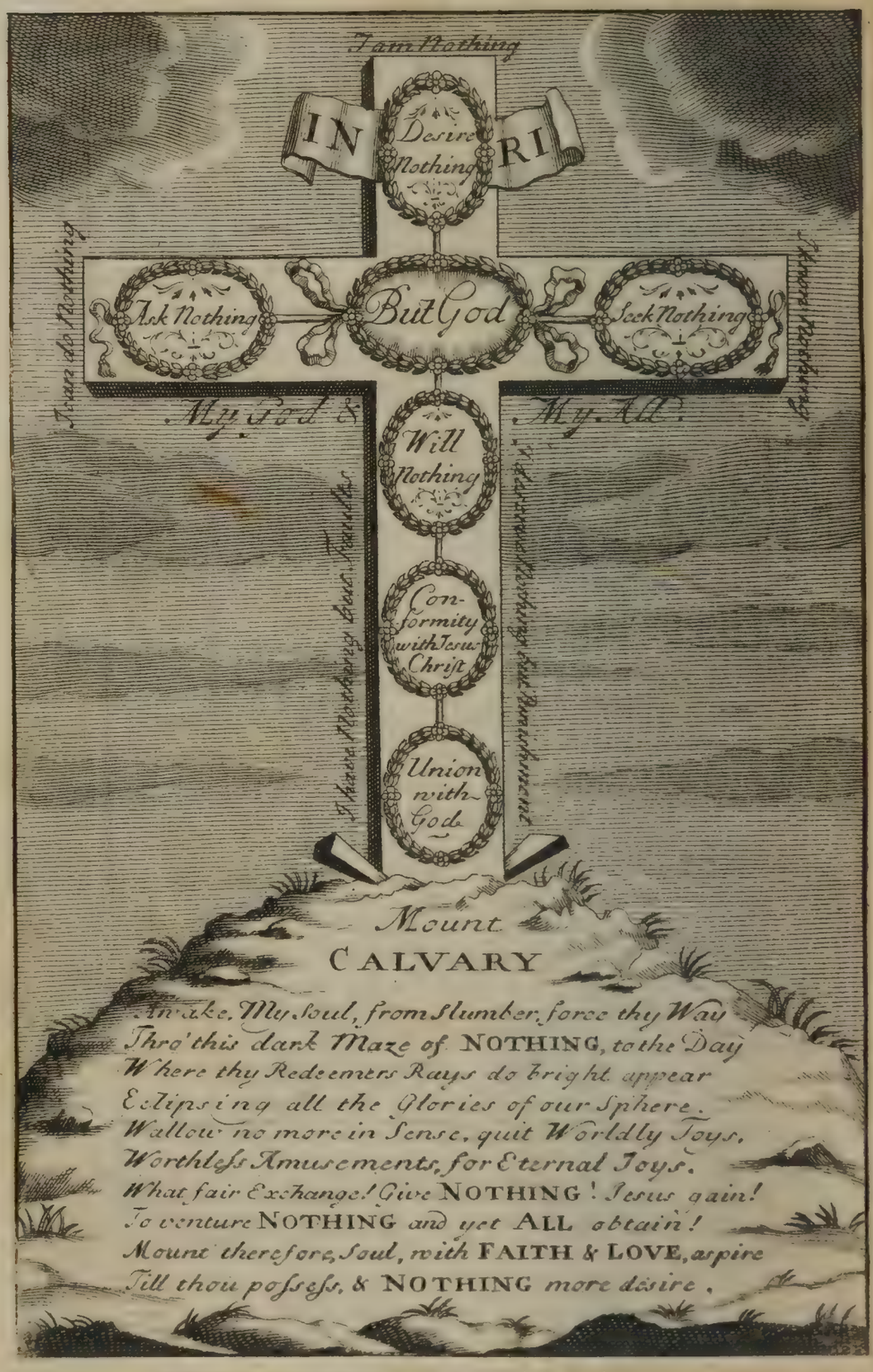
I am Nothing
IN
Desire Nothing
RI
Ask Nothing
But God
Seek Nothing
I am Nothing
Have Nothing
My God &
My All.
Will Nothing
Con-formity with Jesus Christ
Union with God
Mount
CALVARY
Awake, My Soul, from Slumber, force thy Way
Thro' this dark Maze of NOTHING, to the Day
Where thy Redeemers Rays do bright appear
Eclipsing all the Glories of our Sphere.
Wallow no more in Sense, quit Worldly Joys,
Worthless Amusements, for Eternal Joys.
What fair Exchange! Give NOTHING! Jesus gain!
To venture NOTHING and yet ALL obtain!
Mount therefore, Soul, with FAITH & LOVE, aspire
Till thou possess, & NOTHING more desire.

Christian Perfection,

CONSISTING

In the Love of GOD:

Explain'd in Several

LETTERS

To a LADY, &c.

Written Originally in ITALIAN,
By Cardinal *PETRUCCI.*

Now Render'd into *English,*
With an Account of the AUTHOR.

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect, Matth. 5. 48.
He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is Love, 1 John 4. 8.

LONDON,
Printed for RICHARD SMITH, at the *Angel* and *Bible,* without *Temple-Bar.*
MDDCCIV.

THE

PREFACE.

SO intirely were our *Author*'s Thoughts bent upon the Eternal Truth, ſo great a Regard had he for Religion, and ſo much did he ſtudy the pureſt Means to obtain the Love of God, to arrive at *Chriſtian Perfection*, and fulfill the great End of his Creation; that laying aſide all Thoughts of Party, and ſtrictly imitating the Example of Jeſus Chriſt, he employ'd his whole Time in delivering Precepts for the general Good of Mankind. He therefore who owns the Authority of Holy Writ, muſt of Neceſſity allow the enſuing Sheets to contain Precepts as univerſally beneficial, as have been publiſh'd ſince Chriſtianity was imbroil'd and unhappily torn in pieces by variety of Factions and Schiſms. His Writings are ſo ſincere, ſo unmixt with Earthly Deſigns, and ſo intirely directed to the pure Glory of God, that all Parties in General, and each particular Member of any Chriſtian Community may find ſuch ad-

mirable Inſtructions in them, as may conduce to the Salvation of their Souls.

Our *Author*'s firm Adherence to the Church of *Rome*, and the eminent Dignity which his Piety and Merits advanc'd him to there, together with the ſeveral Approbations of their Reviſers, and the general Applauſe the Work has met with in Three Impreſſions, may ſufficiently recommend it to thoſe of that Communion.

Nor ought Proteſtants in general to give it a colder Reception on this Score, ſince He places the ſole Eſſence of Religion in the uniting of the Soul immediately to God by Faith and Love, and abſtracting it intirely from Images that might hinder this Union: For which Doctrine he ran the Hazard of being cenſur'd at *Rome*, tho' at the ſame Time all Men admir'd him for his Piety and exemplary Life: wherefore whilſt this Affair was in Agitation, One asking a learn'd Man, how the Cardinals Firmneſs to the *Roman* Catholick Faith came to be call'd in Queſtion; he anſwer'd, *Perche amava Dio troppo, Becauſe he lov'd God too much:* For tho' he ſpeaks not in direct Terms againſt the Images which ſome in that Church ſo much doat on, yet he cannot be ſuppos'd to countenance or approve of the common Abuſe of them, who will not allow even of Imaginary

ginary Forms, and the groſs Conceptions which Men frame of the Deity; who forbids them all thoſe Repreſentations which a groveling Earthly Mind uſually conceives of God in its neareſt Aproaches to that incomprehenſible Being, whom no Eye can ſee, no Imagination deſcribe, nor no Underſtanding comprehend. And I fear ſome Proteſtants who are ſo averſe to viſible Images of the Deity; if they impartially examine themſelves by his Rules, will be convinc'd, that, though they have not come up to the Idolatry of the Pagans, or what they condemn in the Church of *Rome*, yet they have entertain'd Thoughts unworthy of God, and form'd groſs Ideas of him, very unſuitable to his excellent Nature.

Let the *Presbyterians* (laying aſide Prejudice) look into this Book, and they will find in it to their Amazement, the Points of Juſtification and Faith exactly conformable to their Syſtem: nor can they be offended at it when they perceive here, Man reduc'd to a meer Relative Being, or rather to a Nothing, and God exalted to the higheſt Pitch of Glory and Authority, and Providence extended ſo far

It is the Doctrine of Plato, *that nothing truly is, but* God, *which*

Simplicius *confirms with this Argument, That which hath more Degrees of Privation or Not-Being than of Being, cannot be ſaid to be, but ſuch is the Caſe of all Creatures,* &c.

as to foresee and solely determine the Will of Man, who of himself can do nothing, and consequently ought not to expect Rewards on the Score of his good Works, but only from the Grace of God who is the Cause of 'em, and the Fountain of all Benefits.

If the *Quakers* require an inward Spiritual Light, they will find nothing here to quench the Spirit or extinguish the Light; but rather Heavenly Instructions to rectify their outward Senses, their Inferior Reason, and their Will and Understanding, thereby to make way for the Spirit of God, which will then take Possession of the Soul so qualified, and dwell in them when all Obstacles are remov'd.

He who desires such Precepts as may carry him safe thro' the Stormy Sea of Life, and secure his Eternal Felicity hereafter, may find in the Instructions here laid down, the Means to attain to a true Notion of the Nature of Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice: That there is no real Good but God, no real Evil but Sin; and that the only way to attain Perfection and Christian Virtue, is, to imitate Jesus Christ, by mortifying our selves, and intirely resigning our Will and Understanding to the Will and Light of God, by a close Communion with him in Love: for what

Nullum magnum malum præter culpam, *Cicer.*

Διὰ τ ἀγάπης πλησίον γενέσθαι τῦ Θεῦ. Iren. l. 3.

what can render a Man so happy as to have his Love fixt upon an Object that will never fail or disappoint him; for if we are united to God, he being eternal, cannot fail, his Goodness will give us suitable, nay undeserv'd Returns, his Truth will ease us of all our Jealousies and Fears, his Omnipotence will secure our Hope, and enliven our Faith, his Omniscience will enlighten our Understanding, and his Presence will satiate our thirsty and craving Appetites with Antepasts of eternal Joy and Happiness. For if our inward State and Kingdom be preserv'd from civil Wars, if we quench the raging Flame of our Passions, if we set every Faculty to the discharging of its peculiar Function, not permitting One to invade the Privileges of another, and if we make the Senses obey the Mind and then submit that to God, what more regular, or more happy Oeconomy can be thought on? This will bless us with eternal Peace, adorn our Soul, as a glorious Throne, for the Reception of our Sovereign Lord, raise it out of the miserable Fellowship of Sensual Pleasure to a blessed Familiarity with the Holy Trinity, and make it prefer the Splendor arising from Christian Austerities, before all the Advantages of Nature or Fortune. Our Author likewise traces back Sin and

Vice to their Fountain, and ſhows how to ſtop their Veins and drain their Springs by a holy Reſiſtance of our violent Appetites.

So that upon theſe Conſiderations, this Work cannot but meet with a kind and friendly Reception from All, except thoſe who have intirely abandon'd themſelves to deſperate Diſſolution and Perverſeneſs of Temper; for theſe Men cannot expect any thing here to gratify their corrupt Nature, ſince our *Author* openly declares againſt all ſuch, and has only calculated his Book for a Spiritual Life, which they are ignorant of.

Let not the high Pitch of Purity here propos'd, terrify any one, for we *can do all things through him who ſtrengthens us.* Theſe are the very Commands of our Saviour, and the Practices of the Primitive Saints to go to Heaven by the way of the Croſs. Complain not therefore of too much Difficulties in the Exerciſe of theſe Rules which bring ſo infinite a Reward with 'em, whilſt Men purſue their baſer Ends with greater Induſtry for far leſs Gain. Nor are they contrary even to Nature; for all the Philoſophers were ſenſible that Mortification was uſeful for the Extirpation of Vice, and they aim'd at that Perfection they were capable of,

Phil. 4. 14.

Porphyr. 4. 1. §. 38.

of, by refining their Nature with Abſtinence, renouncing of Pleaſures, correcting the Paſſions and Senſes, and finally by employing their Minds on the Contemplation of the higheſt and moſt worthy Objects; and ſtriving (as one of them has it) *to exalt themſelves above the Rational Life, and attain to a ſort of God-like Contemplation.* Unleſs we ſtudy thus to correct our ſelves, all our Sacrifices, Prayers and Worſhip will be in vain. If Heathens ſpoke and acted ſo well by the Light of Reaſon, to how much a higher Pitch might the Heavenly Fire of Grace and Love elevate our Natures, and make us like *God who is Love:* But inſtead of that which ſhould ſhed its Influence on our external Actions, we ſee the Fire of Anger, Hatred and Envy, puſhing Men on to Strife, Contention and Murder; and the Flames of Luſt breaking out into Lewdneſs and Obſcenity. Can Men hope to find the way to Heaven by ſuch Torches as theſe are, or to be admitted into the Choir of Seraphims, Spirits inflam'd with the pure Love of God, or Cherubims who ſhine with native and eſſential Light? No ſurely, for that Fire of Love and Mortification, which ſhould refine them from their Droſs and Corruption here, ſhall after this Life kindle the Anger of God, raiſe a direful

Simplic. Comment. *Epict.*

Τῷ δὲ κακῷ μάτην περὶ θεοὺς τὸν πολὺν εἶναι πόνον. Porphyr. *Ab.* l. 1. §. 61.

1. Jo. 4. 8.

direful Conflagration of Vengeance againſt them, and convert their fiery Paſſions into an unquenchable Flame which ſhall torment them for Ages everlaſting, whereas the ſincere Love of God would diſpel theſe thick Miſts that darken the Soul, and prove that Vital Heat that preſerves it active, lively and glorious to all Eternity.

THE

THE *Italian* Printer TO THE READER.

THE Divine Providence has been pleas'd to raise the Author *of this Book from the low Station of a Priest of the Oratory, where his own Choice would have kept him till the Day of his Death, to the distinguishing Dignity of Bishop, which Preferment he accepted of out of a forc'd Compliance and Obedience to the Will of the present Pope, who takes particular Care to provide the Churches with eminent Pastors.*

This Work, which has already been of infinite Benefit to many Souls, now comes to be Published a Third Time with this greater Lustre of its Author, which considerable Recommendation should be an Inducement to persuade you to read it with a more serious Attention of Mind, and to practise the Divine Instructions contain'd in it with a more fervent Zeal and Diligence: But the surest way to know its intrinsick Value, is to put it faithfully in Practice.

Literas

Literas & Tractatus Spirituales & Mysticos, a Rev. *P. Petro Matthæo Petrucci*, Cong. Oratorij *Æsinæ* Civitatis Partis primæ compositos, mira Eruditione, Cura, Diligentia ac Spiritu elaboratos, ex Commissione Illustrissimi, & Rev. Domini *Laurentij Cybo* Episcopi *Æsinæ* Civitatis. Ego infra scriptus legi omni majori Diligentia qua potui, et cum repererim nihil contineri, quod Catholicæ Fidei, aut bonis & regulatis Moribus adversetur, imo valde utiles ad Vitam Spiritualem ducendam existimo; quapropter judico has *Literas & Tractatus* prælo mandari, ne tanta Utilitate Christi fideles priventur. Et in fidem propria manu præsentem hanc Scripturam firmavi.

Datum *Æsij*, 4 *Junij*, 1675.

Ita est *Fr. Paulus Hyacynthus* de Bonis à *Camerano* Sac. Theol. Magist. Theologus Illust. & Rever. Episc. ac Pœnitentiar.

IMPRIMATUR
Franciscus Bernardinus Corradinus, J. V. D. Illustriss. & Reverendiss. D. D. *Laurentij Cybo* Episcopi *Æsini* Vic. Gen.

Librum

Librum (*cui Titulus Lettere e Trattati Spirituali e miſtici)* ab admodum Rev. *P. Petro Matthæo Petruccio Æſinate*, hujus Cong. Oratorii Presbytero Eloquentia ac Spiritu conſcriptum ſumma Animi Jucunditate ex Mandato Reverendiſſ. Patris mei Inquiſitoris perlegi: nihilque non Pietatem redolens inveni, Sanctorumque Theologorum Patrum, ac Sacræ Scripturæ Sententijs accommodatum. Spirituales Animæ multum Luminis exhaurient ex Opere, Virtutum ferè omnium Theologicarumq; potiſſimum Semina amplectente. Prælo igitur dignum cenſeo.

Datum *Æſij* die 4 *Junij*, 1675.

Ego *Franciſcus Benignus*, Prior Eccleſ. Cathedr. & S. Officij Conſult.

IMPRIMATUR
Fr. Petrus Martyr Smeraldus, ab *Æſio* Lector Vic. S. Officij.

I *Under-written, by Commiſſion of the Right Honourable and Right Reverend Lord* Laurence Cybo *Biſhop of* Jeſi, *have read with all Diligence poſſible,* The Letters and Treatiſes Spiritual and Myſtical, *compos'd by the Reverend Father* Peter Matthew Petrucci, *of the Congregation of the Oratory of* Jeſi, *written with wonderful Learning, Care, Diligence, and Spirit; and finding that they contain nothing againſt Catholick Faith, or good and honeſt Manners, but are in my Opinion exactly calculated for the Uſe of a Spiritual Life; I therefore judge them fit to be Printed, that Believers may not be denied the Benefit of them. In Teſtimony of which I have confirm'd this preſent Writing with my Hand.*

Given at Jeſi, 4 June, 1675.

Ita eſt *Fr. Paul. Hyacynth.* &c.

IMPRIMATUR
Franciſc. Bernardin. Corradin. &c.

At

AT the Command of the Right Reverend Father my Inquiſitor, I have perus'd with extream Satisfaction of Mind, the Book Intituled, Letters and Treatiſes Spiritual and Myſtical, *written with Eloquence and Spirit by the very Reverend Father* Peter Matthew Petrucci, *Native of* Jeſi, *Prieſt of the Congregation of the Oratory; and have found nothing but what ſavours of Piety, and is conformable to the Opinions of the Holy Fathers, and ſacred Writ. Devout Souls ſhall have much Light communicated to them from this Work, which contains the Seeds and Principles of all Virtue, and more Eſpecially of thoſe that are Theological. I therefore think it worthy of the Preſs.*

Given at Jeſi, *the 4th Day of* June, 1675.

Francis Benigh, *Prior of the Cathed. Church, and Aſſeſſor of the Holy Office.*

IMPRIMATUR

Fr. Peter Martyr Smeraldus, *Native of* Jeſi Lector, *Vic. of the Inquiſition.*

Not

Noi Reformatori dello Studio di Padoua,

HAvendo veduto per atteſtato del Segretario noſtro nel Libro Intitolato, *Lettere e Trattati Spirituali e miſtici*, di Pier *Matteo Petrucci*, Prete della Congregatione dell' Oratorio di *Jeſi*, ſtampato in *Jeſi*, non v 'eſſer coſa alcuna contro Prencipi, e buoni coſtumi, concediamo Licenza à *Gio. Giacomo Hertz* di poterlo riſtampare, oſſervando gli Ordini, *&c.*

Dat. li 7 *Settembre*, 1676.

Alviſe Priuli, Procurator Reformator. }
Anzolo Correr, K. Proc. Ref. }

Gio. Battiſta Nicoloſi, *Segr.*

WE the Reformers of Studies in Padua, *Having ſeen by the Atteſtation of our Secretary, that there is nothing againſt Princes or good Manners, in a Book Printed at* Jeſi, *under the Title of* Letters and Treatiſes Spiritual and Myſtical, *by* Peter Matthew Petrucci, *Prieſt of the Congregation of the Oratory of* Jeſi, *do impower* Gio. Giacomo Hertz *to Reprint it, according to Orders*, &c.

Dated the 7 of September, 1676.

Alviſe Priuli, *&c.* }
Anzolo Correr, *&c.* }

Jo. Bapt. Nicoloſi, Clerk.

OF

OF

Christian Perfection,

AND THE

LOVE of GOD:

In several

LETTERS.

Letter I.

To a LADY.

1. *An Invitation to the Love of God: And,* 2. *What we must propose to our selves as the Scope and End of our Actions, if we would lay claim to Virtue.* 3, *and* 4. *The Foundation of a Spiri-*

tual Life. 5. *Where to lay the Ground-work.* 6, 7, 8. *Directions concerning the Imitation of* Jeſus Chriſt, *and other Chriſtian Virtues.*

1. WHen I meet with a Soul that would heartily be employ'd in the Service and Love of our dear-eſt Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, I am ſtruck at the very Heart with ſuch Joys as to wiſh I were all chang'd into Strength, Activity, Light, and Fire, that I might aſſiſt, enlighten, and enflame it, in ſo juſt and holy an Enterprize. Where-fore I had not only an ardent Deſire, when I convers'd with you, to ſee you warm'd with the Fire of moſt fervent Charity to your true Spouſe, and true Object of all our Love; but alſo upon the reading of the few Lines, that you wrote as a Poſtſcript to our Siſter's Letter, I found an Earneſt-neſs ariſe in my Soul for your Perfe-ction, That you ſhould lay your ſelf entirely out to love the Great and Chief Good, the Creator, Redeemer, and Lo-ver of your Soul. O my God! O chief Glory of my Heart! What fitter or ſweeter Invitation can I give to a chaſt Soul conſecrated unto God, than to call loudly in its Ear; O dear Soul! O bleſt

An Exhorta-tion to the Love of God.

Image

Image of Infinite Beauty! love thy uncreated Original. O Spirit! redeem'd with the Blood of God made Man for thee, love thy Redeemer. O Heart! which in the Divine Sacraments haſt received the Sanctifying Grace of thy God, love thy Sanctifier; love him who is Lovely; love him who is Loving; nay, love thou the moſt High God, who is One in Eſſence, and Three in Perſons, becauſe he is Bounty it ſelf, and Beauty; he is altogether Lovely, full of Charity, and All-loving.

But becauſe we cannot attain to this eminent Hight of the Love of God without ſuitable Means, I have thought fit to draw into the narrow Bounds of this Letter ſome Things that are moſt neceſſary, whereby you may know what you muſt do to become a pure and true Lover and Spouſe of your moſt Gracious Lord *Jeſus*.

How to render our Actions Virtuous.

2. When we undertake any Action, the Thing firſt to be conſider'd is, its Beginning, Means, and End, if we would act with Prudence, a Virtue of greateſt neceſſity, as you have heard in my Sermons. 'Tis the nature of true Virtue to be neceſſarily Good in every Part, and in all Reſpects; and wherever it

wants the Quality of Goodneſs, it immediately degenerates into Vice. Therefore the Life of one who is truly Religious, and a Lover of God, unto which you aſpire, muſt be Good in every Circumſtance, namely, in its Beginning, Means and End. Let us now conſider, how you ought to behave your ſelf in ſuch a Caſe. Firſt, The End is to be conſider'd with the Intention and Purpoſe: Then follows the Execution and Practice, paſſing from the Beginning, through the Means, until you arrive at the End, which was firſt to be deſir'd, and laſt put in Execution. You muſt propoſe to your ſelf no other End but God; and to make it your chief Study to purifie your Intention, by taking care not to ſet up your ſelf, or any other Creature, for the End of your Actions. But as Rivulets that diſcharge themſelves in Rivers, go not thither that they may ſtop and continue in them, but that, by their Union with the greater Stream, they may more eaſily glide to the Sea, the common End and Receptacle of Water; ſo beware, leſt you act, or frame your Words or Thoughts, for your own Intereſt, Pleaſure, Vain-Glory, or for any other Creature, ſo as to reſt in them, as your laſt End:

The End of our Actions is to be firſt conſidered; and what our End ought to be.

End: But direct whatsoever concerns you, whether your Labour, Sufferings, Thoughts or Discourses, to your true ultimate End, namely, the Love and Glory of God. When *Mary Magdalen* of *Pazzi* set about any Action, and if through Mistake she had neglected to purifie or direct her Intention to her beloved Lord; she no sooner perceiv'd it to be so, but she broke off the Work, rectified and disposed both it and her self for God, and then fell to work again. You must therefore strive to use all Diligence in this Purity of Intention, even in small Matters; and be wary, since you find, that the most of your Performances are bent to your own Satisfaction, Interest, or vain Ostentation. And all this is wrought by Nature with so great Subtilty and Cunning, that it requires more than an ordinary Light of God to discover it. As oft as you are touch'd with Disquiet of Mind, Summon up your Thoughts, and you shall clearly see them set upon Property and Interest, hankering after something you may call your own. Be not anxiously concern'd about these Things that sooth your Fancy, but leave your self in the Hand of God, and resign your self

Purity of Intention.

wholly to him, without taking any more Care of your ſelf, or of any other Earthly Creature; and your Soul ſhall be preſently ſeiz'd with a peaceable Calm in the midſt of the jarring Tumults of Your Senſes, which tho' they continue, yet you ſhall be able to bear them, to the Glory of God, with a compoſure of Mind void of all Care.

How the Ground-work is to be laid.

3. Let us now come to the Beginning, and ſee what is firſt to be done, to render your Spiritual Fabrick durable and laſting. And firſt, you muſt be very careful to lay the Foundation well. And how can this be done, but by digging up the Earth, making a deep Ditch, till we come at firm Ground, and filling the ſame again with Stones of the largeſt Size, either cemented with good Mortar, or ſtrongly mortiſſed one into another, upon which the Fabrick may be rear'd towards Heaven. This is the Courſe of Life you muſt hold by in time to come. You muſt dig up the *Earth* out of your Soul, and leave a Vacuity and Emptineſs in its ſtead. Dear Madam, nay, truly dear in *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is the Ocean of Charity; a great Work requires a large Foundation, and a wide *Space*, and

and a great deal of Rubbiſh muſt be carried off. By the Vacuity of the Soul, is meant a real and hearty *Humility*; the Rubbiſh is, the Earthly Creatures, and even your own Earthly Body, that muſt be diſlodg'd, and have no Place in it. And for this end I would have you ſeriouſly to Meditate upon theſe Five Words of my Croſs: *I am Nothing*; *I can do Nothing*; *I know Nothing*; *I have Nothing but Faults*; *and I deſerve Nothing but Puniſhment*. *Humility and Annihilation.* *Five*

Such *Being* as you have is not properly yours, for you are not your own Maker; nor did your Parents form your Limbs and Body; nor hath any other Creature given Breath and Being to your Soul: But you are entirely the Workmanſhip of God. You, conſider'd as you, that is abſolutely, and without reſpect to God, of your ſelf, and in your ſelf are not, neither have you any Being; for God is All in all. Whatſoever you poſſeſs is the Gift of God; you have your Being from him, and in him, and without God and out of him neither can you or any Creature exiſt.

You of your ſelf *can do Nothing*. How many of your Deſigns and Reſolutions prove unſucceſsful, and fall to *Nothing* 2.

the Ground? The Reaſon is, becauſe you *can do Nothing*, but what God gives you Strength to do: 'Tis therefore God, who is ſtrong in you, and who gives you Power; but you without God can do Nothing. You deſire to Pray well, and ſucceſsfully, but all in vain: And what other Reaſon can be given for it, than, That you *can do Nothing?* For all this, be not troubled or diſcouraged; but rather learn from hence your Weakneſs without God; and your Prayer ſhall not be ineffectual, if you can reap this Advantage from your *Diſtractions*, *Weakneſs*, and *Ignorance.*

Nothing 3. I add *Ignorance*, becauſe without God *you know Nothing.* When we have not the Light of God, and of his Grace, how oft are we ſo ſupinely Ignorant, as to miſtake Good for Evil, and Evil for Good. Can we imagine to our ſelves a greater Ignorance, than not to know Worldly Vanity, the horrible Deformity of Sin, our own Miſeries, the Deceitfulneſs of Worldly Maxims, and of Senſual Pleaſures, the unſpeakable Shortneſs of our Life, the terrible Judgments of God, and a dreadful Eternity that attend us? Can there be a more downright Ignorance, than not to know what

is

is true Virtue? Not to understand how to overcome Vice, mortifie our Passions, and subdue our own Judgment and Will. Can we suppose a greater Ignorance, than not to discern the nearest and most intimate Presence of God in our Soul? Not to know the incomparable Power and Virtue of *Jesus Christ* exciting us to imitate him? Not to reflect upon that incomprehensible Beauty, Greatness, Glory, and Blessedness of our Sovereign Creator, by which we were created? How gross is his Ignorance, who knows the whole World, and yet knows not the Maker and Governor of the World! But Oh how much more miserable is the Man who does not love him!

You have likewise *Nothing* of your *own, but Faults.* Which take their Rise, and proceed from the bad Use you make of that Free Will which God gave you; upon condition, That you offering it back again to Him, as your true Lord, he should hereafter give himself for your perpetual Reward in Heaven. But you have unjustly usurped the Dominion and Goverment of your Will, and, by robbing God of it, have bestow'd it very oft upon the Creatures; you have not only consented to this, but also

Nothing 4.

alſo done it willingly. But this is a Fault, and can be only charg'd on you.

For the Performance of what is really Good, we muſt be endued with Grace from God our Lord, firſt to invite and allure us, and then to accompany us; He muſt ſtrengthen and ſupport us to the End of this good Work. And if Grace ſhould not begin, or ſhould leave us in the midſt, or end, we, by our ſelves, could never perform one Work worthy of Eternal Life. O how pitiful Creatures are we! What ſmall Opinion would the World harbour of one, whoſe Stock conſiſted of nothing but a parcel of Raggs and old Shoes, and ſuch ſort of Traſh? Who had only an heap of ſmall Peebles and Sticks good for nothing? We are Poorer, ſeeing all our Riches are Defects, Inclinations to Evil, a backwardneſs to Good, ill Habits, unruly Senſes, wild Paſſions, an hard and ſtubborn Brain, Sins already committed, and a continual Danger of committing more. O how deep an Abyſs of Miſery is Man, if we take him by himſelf, and ſeparated from God? I in good earneſt confeſs my mind to you, That whilſt I am a writing this Truth, I am perfectly ſeiz'd with Horrour, Giddineſs, and Fear, in conſigning it to Paper,

And

And 'tis nevertheleſs moſt True! And, alas! too little regarded, both by Me and many more! If we have no Goodneſs in us, what can we deſerve? *Nothing at all:* Seeing he deſerves Nothing who has only Faults, or if he does, 'tis only Puniſhment. Why then ſhould we complain, when we find not the Good that belongs not to us; but, on the contrary, ſome Puniſhment, which we ſo juſtly deſerve. O how peaceable, humble, and patient a Life, ſhould a true Chriſtian lead, who would love Truth! We all acknowledge, that we merit Hell: And then we kindle into a Paſſion, we fall into Frenzy and Rage, or we are troubled and run into ill Humour, Slothfulneſs, and Dejection, upon the account of every ſmall Affliction that befals us, or Evil that is done us. Whereon canſt thou ground thy Complaint, O Soul, who haſt nothing elſe but Faults, and deſerveſt nothing but Puniſhment, and who, according to thy own Confeſſion, doſt merit the Pains of Hell? Art thou ſuch a Fool as to think, that whatever does, or can befall thee in this Life, is able to come up to the Degree of Torments in Hell? Indeed I hope Common Senſe will never forſake you at ſuch a rate. Live therefore quietly,

Nothing 5.

quietly, humbly, and patiently, under God's Fatherly Correction, that Chaſtiſes thee gently, to the end thou may'ſt not be Obnoxious to a more rigorous Chaſtiſement hereafter. Suppoſe a Criminal that were condemned to the Gallies for the ſpace of ten Years, or his whole Life time, and if this Puniſhment were changed into Fifteen or Twenty Stripes; are you of Opinior, that he would be ſorry at this? He would, without all doubt, make light of it, and leap for Joy. Juſt ſo ought an humble Soul to demean it ſelf amidſt its Croſſes, ſo far below the Puniſhments due to its Faults; ſeeing Croſſes are ſent us by God with ſo great Love and Wiſdom, that they may be hereafter chang'd into moſt happy and endleſs Glory.

4. Dear Madam, 'Tis your Duty to meditate upon theſe and ſuch like Things ſeveral Months, and every Day (by the Aſſiſtance of Divine Grace) to weigh more and more your own conſiderable Nothingneſs, and the great Vanity of the Creatures, That God alone is All in All; that you are only in Him; by his Power you are ſtrong; by the Light of God you underſtand; from his Grace you derive your Virtue;

tue; and by the Mercy of God, and Blood of *Jesus Christ*, you are made capable of Glory. And when you have penetrated, weighed, and duly considered these important Truths of Catholick Faith; you must make it your main Business to cleanse your Heart, and make room for a Foundation. Remove far from it the vain Opinion of your self, and of your Being, Power, and Knowledge. Discharge your self of that Love, which you unjustly bestow upon your self, a vile Creature, who have nothing lovely in you; since Faults are your only Portion, cast out your Interest, Pretensions, and Desires, seeing Punishment is all you deserve. Thrust out also the Creatures, by withdrawing your Affections from every thing of this World. And finally, you must make your self Empty in good earnest, (as, I know, you have by the Grace of God) that you may become really Poor, and a true Daughter and Spouse of *Jesus Christ*; who, tho' he was infinitely Rich, yet became so Poor for our sakes, that he had not where to lay his holy, wearied, and sorrowful Head.

What Things we must cast out of our Hearts.

5. I

Where to find firm Ground for the Foundation.

5. I told you, That, to lay a Foundation, they ſtill dig, until they meet with firm Ground: Let us therefore ſee how this may be applied to the Caſe of your Soul. As long as you reſt in your ſelf, and lay the Streſs of your Deſigns, Thoughts, or Affections, upon your own Watchfulneſs, Induſtry, Talents, Strength, and Virtue, or upon any other Creature whatſoever in this World, you are not as yet come to a firm and ſolid Bottom. Obſerve how unconſtant, changeable, and unfix'd, Humane Creatures are. To day we are well, to morrow ſick. Now we love, or are loved; and in a Minute we are filled with Untowardneſs and Diſlike, or we become the nauſeous Objects of Averſion to others: Sometimes we are altogether Devout, at other times Careleſs and Luke-warm; ſometimes full of Fire, ſometimes we Freeze in to the Chilneſs of Ice: We ſometime fly to Heaven, as we imagine, when behold every light Weight or Burden ſinks us as low as the Earth. And, in fine, to day we live, and to morrow we die. O humane Creature! O thou ſmall Atom, toſs'd with a thouſand Winds! What will become of theſe Buildings that are founded on thee? Tell me, if thou

canſt:

canſt. Without all queſtion their Fate ſhall be the ſame, with the Houſe *built upon Sand*, mentioned by our Saviour in his Holy Goſpel, which fell as ſoon as the Wind blew, and the Storm roſe to beat upon it, and great was its fall. But the firm and unmoveable Rock, on which we muſt build, is *Chriſt Jeſus*, God and Man, beſides whom there is no ſure Bottom for a Foundation. Whoſoever will lay his Foundation any where elſe, ſhall not rear a Building, but ſhall build a Precipice. Now the way to come at this Foundation, which is ſo deep, and ſo little known to our Senſes, and to Humane Judgment, is by the ſtrength of Faith; for 'tis Faith only that has ſufficient Light to lead us unto *Chriſt Jeſus*. 'Tis therefore neceſſary to your ſure and ſolid Perfection, that you habituate and accuſtom your ſelf *to live by Faith, and not by Senſe*, nor by Humane Reaſon. You ſhall then live by Faith, when you endeavour to perform all your Actions as in the preſence of the Living and True God, ſo that from henceforth your Thoughts may be wholly Pure, becauſe God ſees them: And your Diſcourſe may be altogether Holy and Virtuous, or at leaſt Reaſonable, becauſe God hears it: That your

Matth. 7.

To live by Faith.

your Actions may be intirely and in every reſpect Righteous, Virtuous, and directed to their proper ultimate End, becauſe God ſees them, knows them, and will Judge them in his own time. While you Pray, you ought to practiſe the moſt lively Belief of the Sacred Preſence of God; neither will Prayer prove Unprofitable, tho' you think on nothing elſe. O my God! how would a poor blind Man ſtand before his Prince tho' he ſaw him not, but only was ſure that the Prince were taking notice of him? What a Modeſty! What a Meen! What an Humility and a Reverence would he put on! But Princes ſee only the Outſide. How ought we then to behave our ſelves in the Preſence of the Great and moſt High Creator and Monarch of the Univerſe, who ſees the darkeſt Receſſes of our Soul? What ought our Behaviour to be in the Quire, in the Church, and in the Oratory? And not only ſo, for this is not enongh, but alſo how circumſpectly muſt we live in every Place, even in our cloſeſt Retirements, ſeeing the Great God is every where moſt preſent, who gives Being to every Place, and to all Things, and from whom nothing is hid? Endeavour to live by Faith,

The Preſence of God, and its Effects.

Faith, honouring God in your Spiritual Directors, by giving Obedience to their Commands and Directions without Resistance, Delay, or Grumbling; for this is the Command of God, whose Will it is that you should be Governed by them. Be down-right and plain in Confessing your Sins before Christ, with a sincere Humility, and hearty Repentance; accuse your self of the manifold Evils to which your Will has given Consent; make no Excuses for your self, neither lay the Blame of them upon any Creature, for Nothing is able to force your Inclination, nor can that be Sinful which is not also Voluntary: If then that which you confess be a Sin, you have freely given your Assent to it, and therefore it is only your own Fault; for it could not have been a Fault without your Consent, nor could a Second Person have forc'd your Will. 'Tis true, Devils, Men, and Opportunity, may incite and perswade our Will to Sin, and may force our External Members, and lower Faculties; but if we stedfastly, and with a willing and hearty Resolution, give a Denial to all their Invitations and Perswasions, 'tis simply impossible for us to be Vitious. When therefore at

Rules for Confession.

any time we do amiss, we are guilty only of those Sins we have committed out of free Choice.

I have prosecuted this so far, because it is a most necessary Point to make an humble and penitent Confession of our Offences, and because the excusing and cloaking of our Faults prove very oft a Hinderance to Repentance, and Abhorrence of them, and consequently to an Amendment of Life. Unhappy we! if we pretend to bring any plausible Reason for Wickedness. *All Virtues (saith St.* Dorotheus) *are lodg'd in one Virtue, which is, to accuse and blame our selves.* You must have a very strong and lively Faith, to beleive, That, in the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, who being set in the highest Heaven, at the right Hand of his Eternal Father, some of his brightest Rays are sent down to give Virtue to that Heavenly Bread for the Nourishment of our Souls. My God, how much could I enlarge here! Think only, how the Angels must stand in the Presence of that unveil'd God; and conclude, That we ought to stand the same way before the same God, whose Glory is cover'd from us as with a Veil. Consider, that tho' he

Serm. VII.

Rule for Communicating aright.

he be hidden from us, yet we lye open to his Omniſcient View.

6. But I earneſtly wiſh, That you would walk by the Power of Faith in the Imitation of the Virtues of Jeſus Chriſt, and in the Performance of his Evangelical Doctrines and Leſſons. Believe me, dear Madam, 'tis the Root of our Sanctity, to make deep Impreſſions of this grand Truth upon our Souls, That Chriſt is God and Man. O how lively muſt this Truth be, not dead; active, and not idle; if we would deſire to become Real and Holy Chriſtians!

Faith in Chriſt, God made Man.

But if Chriſt be God, it follows of courſe, that he is infinite Wiſdom and Holineſs. Therefore all that he has done or ſuffered as Man, and the Leſſons he has taught, are Abyſſes of Wiſdom and Holineſs. Therefore all the Doctrines, and Actions, that are contrary to thoſe of Chriſt, (let them be ſpoken or done by whom you pleaſe) are Folly, Ignorance, Error, and Sin. Conclude therefore, that then the Soul ſhall be only Happy and Holy, when it ſhall have learn'd to obey Chriſt, and conform'd it ſelf to its beloved Maſter, who is true God and Man. By this Fundamental and Catholick Truth, all Vices are rooted out, all Worldly Maxims, Vain Reſpect,

The Practice and Maxims of this Faith.

Sawcy Freaks of Honour, and Earthly Intereſt, are caſt to the Ground; and by it Virtue is planted, and Holineſs built up.

The Spiritual Fabrick is rear'd, by imitating the Virtues of Chriſt.

7. But to follow the Thread of my Diſcourſe, the way to fill the Trench fitly prepar'd for laying of the Ground-work, and rearing towards Heaven the well-founded Fabrick, is this: Let us put one Stone above another, that is Virtue upon Virtue, one good Work upon another; nor let us ever give over until we arrive at Paradiſe. Let us therefore take into our Thought the Life, Cuſtoms, Doctrine, Paſſion, and Death of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and let us ſtrive by the help of his Grace, (without which we can do nothing) to conform our ſelves to him, and become at leaſt little Pictures of that moſt holy Original. The blind World cries, Bleſſed are the Rich. Chriſt preaches loudly to us by Word and Deed, *Bleſſed are the Poor.* Now if we have but one Grain of Faith, whom will we believe? And with whom will we ſide? The fooliſh World bids us take our Pleaſures, and Divertiſements, and be merry. Chriſt thunders and denounces a *Wo to you, who have received your Conſolation here*, and *Bleſſing to thoſe who mourn*, and are afflicted in this World: And he wept, and was fill'd with moſt bitter, tho' at the

Matth. 5.

Luke 6.

ſame

ſame time with moſt holy, Afflictions. Now therefore, if we have but one ſmall Remnant of Faith left us, whom will we Believe? And to whom will we Adhere? The World bawls in our Ears, Bleſſed are the Great, Bleſſed are theſe, who are Eſteem'd and Honour'd: Honour by all means muſt be promoted; the Spots and Stains of Phantaſtical Honour muſt needs be waſhed away, even with Blood unjuſtly ſhed Chriſt cries, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.* *Bleſſed are ye, when Men ſhall perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of Evil againſt you falſly.* *Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven.* And how many Injuries did he ſuffer? How many Affronts? How many Calumnies and Reproaches? He was cloath'd like a Fool in Mock-Robes of Purple and Scarlet; he paſs'd in the opinion of the People for one poſſeſs'd with a Devil, for a Magician, and next Door to an Infidel; leſs regarded than a Robber and Murderer; laugh'd at for a falſe King; and at laſt, like a Ring-leader of Thieves, Crucify'd betwixt two of them. Now therefore if we have Faith, whom ſhould we believe? And which of theſe two Parties ſhould we take up with? Deareſt Madam, I beſeech you to take notice of ſuch Leſſons of Truth as theſe are.

Matth. 11.

Matth. 5.

Behold how they undeceive us of Worldly Prejudices. Examine therefore both Day and Night, together with these, all the other Instructions, Actions, and Sufferings, of your Spouse *Jesus Christ:* And believe me, there cannot be a better Book to learn true Perfection by, than the Gospel, and the Life, and Death, of the True Son of God, who was made the Son of the Bless'd Virgin for our sake. With how much the more Simplicity, and pure Faith, you set your self to Consider and Imitate *Jesus Christ*, so much the greater Progress do you make in the Way of Eternal Life. Whosoever forsakes this Path, runs himself upon a Precipice. O sweet *Jesus!* blest is the Man who hath a sound Understanding to consider thee, Memory to remember thee, Will to love thee, and every other Faculty, as Strength, Members, Body, and Life, to imitate thee, by acting for thee, and suffering with thee!

Virtues necessary for the Fabrick.

8. I shall put an End to this long Letter, or rather Spiritual Treatise, by recommending to your particular Care, *First*, To Exercise your self in a strict *Observance.* Observance of your Rule that was dictated by *Jesus Christ*'s Word and Example. *Secondly*, To observe an humble Obedience to your Superiours, being still mind- *Obedience.* ful that *Jesus Christ* was Obedient, even

to

to the Death. *Thirdly*, I recommend to you External Mortification, but more especially that which is Internal. There is no Vine that wants more to have its ſuperfluous Branches prun'd, and its deform'd Crookedneſs made ſtreight, than we, who are both without and within full of ſuperfluous, vain, and idle Thoughts, Words, and Actions: And which is worſe, perverſe and crooked, and ſhall be ſo ſtill, unleſs we be rectified, and directed to our proper End, which is Virtue, and God. I wiſh the Study of Mortification may never ceaſe to dwell in you, till you ceaſe to live. Love not that which gratifies Senſe, nor abſtain from theſe Things which diſpleaſe it; becauſe it is an Animal void of Diſcretion, and full of pois'nous Malice. *Fourthly*, I recommend to you the Practice of Prayer, not only Vocal, but Mental alſo in a more ſpecial manner. This my Letter hath furniſh'd you with Matter enough for Prayer; but if you do not ply it ſeriouſly, it will not bring forth that Fruit in you that my Soul longs for, and pants after. Begin at the Foundations, and what is there mentioned concerning the Knowledge of Worldly *Vanity*, and of your *Nothingneſs*; and ſome conſiderable time after, proceed to the Virtues and Sufferings of our Lord and Maſter *Jeſus*

Mortification.

Prayer.

Christ. Be sure never to forget this Maxim of St. *Francis: Expect not to do any thing worth the while, if you endeavour not to be a Lover of Prayer. God will bless what you are about, just so far as you love Prayer.* And, *Fifthly*, I recommend Charity to you above all Things, which is the Roof and Top of the Spiritual Fabrick. Charity, I say, toward your Neighbour, and to those of your own Society, which I confine to Two Rules: 1. Strive to do good to every Body, both in General and Particular, as far as it is possible and expedient; and that without any Prospect of Interest, or so much as to have Pretensions to one Return of Thanks; founding your Satisfaction here, namely, That you thereby glorifie God, and promote the Good of his Creature. 2. Put your self in a readiness of Mind, to receive all manner of Evil from any Person, without being offended at them, hating any Body, or complaining of the Injury done you. And what I finally recommend, is Love to God, that you may love him, your self, and every other Creature only in him, and for him, and dispose of them to his Glory, Honour, and good Pleasure; and that you may suffer and labour, live and die in God, and for God, who can sanctifie you.

Charity.

Jesi, 26 Dec. 1673.

Of

Of the Imitation of *JESUS CHRIST.*

Letter II.

To the same——.

1. *Perfection consists in a Supernatural Likeness with God.* 2. *From which, Charity, and an Union with the same God, do flow.* 3. *Our Flesh must be made like to that of Christ.* 4. *A brief Account of the Perfection of his Humane Nature.* 5. *The Knowledge of our Nothingness, and its Effects.* 6. *Love and Gratitude to our Redeemer.* 7. *The Hope and Pure Intention of the Soul.*

FOR laying the sure Foundations of Godliness in your Soul, 'tis necessary, first of all, to see what is your ultimate End, towards which you ought directly to turn the Intentions and Affections of your Heart. It is of great Moment and Concern to know the right Way at the beginning of your Journey: Many Souls for want of this Knowledge travel far, over-weary themselves, and suffer much, and yet make but inconsiderable Ad-

Advancement; and ſome never arrive at the height of Perfection, becauſe that inſtead of going ſtreight on, they either light on a wrong Path, or make many Windings, and idle Delays.

Wherein the Perfection of the Creature conſiſts.

1. Our Lord God is the True, Immenſe, Uncreated, and ſole *Super-eſſential* Perfection. The Creature of its own Nature is not perfect: But it ſhall be ſo much the more or leſs perfect, as it partakes more or leſs of the Likeneſs of God; and ſo far as it is united to God. This is ſo univerſal a Truth, that it cannot be denied by any true Chriſtian: Wherefore I need not conſume Time to prove it, but ſhall only make it my Buſineſs to clear it. Some of the Creatures are Irrational, others Rational: Thoſe bear ſome Reſemblance of God in them, who is their Creator, becauſe every Effect ſome way or other reſembles its Cauſe; but their Likeneſs is only remote: Rational Creatures come up nearer to this Reſemblance of God, or rather were made after his Image and Likeneſs.

Two Ways of being like to God.

But becauſe our Lord God may be conſidered, either as the Author of Nature, or as the *Chief Good*, and ſo above what can be call'd Nature; therefore the Rational Creature may be like God in two Reſpects, either as having his Natural, or Supernatural Likeneſs. The firſt is generally in

all

all Creatures, even in the Devils themſelves, and the Damn'd, tho' it is mightily impair'd, and deform'd by Sin. The Second (which comes from the ſanctifying Grace of God) is in juſt Men, who are in the Way to Heaven, (tho' it be not in them as yet fully perfect) and in the Spirits of Angels and Men, who enjoy the unveil'd Preſence and full Fruition of God in Heaven; and this is abſolutely perfect. This Divine Similitude, which Good Men on Earth partake of by Means of Grace, can only be loſt by Mortal Sin wilfully committed by a Soul, which in effect in this Caſe remains void of all kind of Virtue or Sanctity, and indeed unlike to God, who is infinite Virtue and Holineſs. Our natural Failings, and ſmall Errors, deſtroy not all at once this Super-natural Likeneſs, which naturally flows from Grace: Tho' they, in ſome meaſure, ſully and darken that moſt Spiritual Splendour and Incorporeal Beauty that attends the Image of God. But even as a King would not love to behold his Picture defac'd with Duſt; but more eſpecially would he wiſh to ſee it kept fair and clean, if the ſame, beſides the being his Image, were alſo the Draught and Work of his own moſt skilful Hands: So our Lord God neither loves, nor can he love the choaking Duſt

How this Supernatural Similitude is loſt, or darken'd.

of

of ſmall Trips, and Faults in a Soul, not only made after the Image of his Infinite Beauty and Goodneſs, but which was likewiſe immediately created by himſelf. Wherefore the Soul ſhould abhor them above any Puniſhment which can befal it, and ſhould ſtill more and more purifie it ſelf from them by the help of Grace, and of the Holy Sacraments; that the great King may pleaſantly behold with a ſweet, raviſhing, and uniting Love, this his fine Picture, that is, a Soul endu'd with Righteouſneſs.

The Love of God ariſes from being like to him, and from it Union, and from Union Perfection.

2. But becauſe Love ariſes from Likeneſs, as Hatred is produc'd by being Unlike; (hence it is, that we ſee in the Inanimate Things of Nature, and the Senſitive Beaſts, that thoſe of them which have like Qualities love one another; whereas on the contrary, thoſe that have unlike Diſpoſitions hate and fly from one another:) I therefore ſaid, *That Likeneſs is the Cauſe of Love*; from whence it follows, That the more the Juſt Soul is like God by this Supernatural Aſſimilation, occaſion'd by Grace; ſo much the more is it loved by its Chief Good, and ſo much the more is it Enamour'd with him. And becauſe Love creates Union, (as Hatred occaſions a Separation) the more conſtant, fervent, and greater the Love is, ſo much the

the more ſtrictly does it unite and claſp the Lovers together; (juſt ſo Hatred, the more Intenſe and Vehement it be, with ſo much the greater Violence does it divide Men, and makes the Breach the wider:) From which we may gather, That the more a Soul loveth God, and is loved by him; ſo much the more ſtrict, intimate, and intenſe, will the Love be, that paſſes betwixt theſe two Lovers, God and the Soul. And becauſe the more cloſe and entire the Union is, ſo much the more does he who unites himſelf, partake of the Conditions of That with which he is united, (as we ſee in a little Water mix'd with ſtrong Wine:) Therefore ſeeing God is All Perfection, the ſtricter he ſhall unite the beloved and loving Soul to himſelf, ſo much the more will he communicate to it of his Perfections, as far as it is capable to receive them. And with how much the more Cloſeneſs, Earneſtneſs, and Purity, the Soul cleaves unto God, ſo much the perfecter ſhall it be. And becauſe there can be no greater Union, than for Two Natures to become One; therefore the Soul, and the whole Humane Nature of *Jeſus*, being made One with his Divinity by a Perſonal Union, and making only One Perſon of the Godhead, tho' he has Two Natures, one Divine, the other

other Humane; it therefore follows, that we cannot imagine a greater Perfection, than what ſhines and manifeſts it ſelf in the Humane Nature of *Jeſus*, next to God, who is the ſame Uncreated and Immenſe Perfection. And other Spirits, according to the degree of this Union, are more or leſs Perfect.

The Cauſe of the great Holineſs of Chriſts Humane Nature.

3. It follows from all theſe Chriſtian Truths, that the true Way to Perfection, is, *A Supernatural Likeneſs, a Love of, and Union with God.* And the Endeavour and Study of our Souls, aſſiſted by Grace, muſt needs be, *To improve, and ſtill to grow more and more, in this Likeneſs, Love, and Unity.* But becauſe, *God* (as our Saviour told the Woman of Samaria) *is a Spirit*; the Soul therefore cannot be very like God, until it once be Purified from the Dregs of the Body, and be Spiritualized. And becauſe the Eternal Word, who is very God, was made Fleſh, and took upon him our Humane Nature; 'tis certain we cannot be perfect, until our Fleſh, and it's Faculties and Actions, be made conformable to the Humane Nature and Operations of *Jeſus Chriſt*. But becauſe Prudence teacheth us to begin with theſe Things that are Eaſieſt, and then to aſcend by degrees to theſe that are more Difficult, therefore to obtain an Union with God, we muſt

John 4. *Our Spirit muſt be like God, and our Fleſh like the Fleſh of Jeſus Chriſt.*

must set our selves to the Imitation of *Jesus*; God-made-Man: And thus the Soul, by the Assistance of Grace, comes to be like, and united with *Jesus*-God. You will now understand more clearly what our Redeemer saith of himself, *I am the Way*, and *I am the Gate*: Seeing it is first necessary to walk by the Way of the Imitation of *Christ*-made-Man: And Man, passing through this Gate by Virtue of Imitative Love, enters at last into the Immense Palace, that is, into the Divine Nature of *Christ*-God. This is the reason why you may first read in the Cross I have sent you, *Conformity with Jesus Christ* (which I wish you may attain to by imitating him;) then follows in the last place, *Union with God*, which is the supreme and highest Degree, both of Humane and Angelical Perfection.

John 14, & 10.

4. If you ask me, wherein this Conformity with *Jesus Christ* consists? I answer in General, That it consists in whatsoever is Virtue, Goodness, Holiness and Perfection: For indeed the Sacred Humane Nature of the Son of God is a boundless Sea of all Virtue, and Holiness, to such a sublime Degree, that whilst it owns the Divine Nature to be higher, it sees all the Virtues and Perfections of all the Creatures taken together, laid in a much lower

Conformity with Jesus Christ, wherein it consists.

Rank under its Feet. Nay, it rather ſees all our Virtue and Holineſs to be Nothing beſides a number of Streams which ſpring from its Merits, and moſt bleſſed Paſſion and Blood; as all the *Rivers* ariſe by ſecret Chanels and Conveyances from the Sea. And upon this account, the Evangeliſt St. *John*, after he had ſaid, That *the Word was made Fleſh, and was full of Grace and Truth*; ſubjoins, *And from his Fulneſs we all received*: That is, (as St. *Thomas* explains it) *All the Apoſtles, Patriarchs, Prophets, Holy and Juſt Men, who have been, are, or ſhall be, yea the very Angels have receiv'd their Grace from this boundleſs Ocean of Grace, which is Chriſt.* O bleſſed and moſt lovely *Jeſus Chriſt!* how true is it, that the unmeaſurable Fulneſs of thy Grace, is the Cauſe of all the Grace that is in every intelligent Creature! Thou art the Fountain of all our Gifts, and Benefits. And as all the Rays of the Day originally derive their Source from the moſt bright Body of the Sun; ſo from thy incomparable Light, ſprings all the Light, Virtue, and Grace, that enlighten our Darkneſs. And therefore the Evangeliſt again moſt reaſonably concludes, that *Grace and Truth came by Jeſus Chriſt*; ſeeing this moſt bleſſed Humane Nature was aſſum'd by the Eternal Word, that he

Eccl. 1.

Joh. 1.

s Thomas, *Ib. Lect.* 10.

John 1.

he might accompliſh the compleat Work of our Redemption in it, and by it: By whoſe Merits (together alſo with our due Concurrence) we are made Partakers of the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, and of Virtue and Holineſs, and by it we hope for that Glory, which is the laſt and moſt happy End of our Pilgrimage. It appears from this Doctrine, how wonderfully St. *Paul* ſpoke, when he ſaid, *For another Foundation can no Man lay, than that is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt.* He therefore, and he only, is the Univerſal Foundation, and the chief Principle of the whole Catholick Church; ſeeing he by himſelf hath eſtabliſh'd it, and is able alſo to confirm all thoſe that rely upon him: And the Apoſtle tells us, that the Father *gave him to be the Head over all things to the Church, who filleth all in all.* Chriſt as God, together with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, is the firſt Foundation of all the Elect: And the holy Humane Nature of Chriſt united to the Word, grounded on the Divine Nature, is the Foundation of the Church, next to God, and has eſtabliſh'd it; and he is Head of all the Elect, who partake of his Grace *according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt*, as St. *Paul* informs us.

1 Cor. 3.

Eph. 1.

Eph. 4.

Two Virtues may arise from this Doctrine; the first is the Knowledge of our Nothingness.

5. From this Solid and Catholick Doctrine we may gather two Virtues, which, in my Opinion, are the Roots from whence springs every thing that is good in the Soul. One of them is the profound Truth, and lively Knowledge of our Nothingness, as to those Things that are Virtuous and Supernatural. No Virtue is properly a Virtue, neither can it be acceptable to God, if Sanctifying Grace does not lodge in our Soul. But because we must receive from God all the Grace which we have, or are capable of, by means of the holy Humane Nature and Merits of *Jesus*; neither can we possess any good Thing worthy of Eternal Life, if it be not first begun and planted in us by our dearest Saviour *Christ Jesus*; hence it follows, that the more we have of Virtue, Grace, and Perfection, so much the more ought we to acknowledge, that it is not our Virtue, but the Mercy of our God, and the Diffusion of the Merits of our most excellent Saviour; we must therefore be endued with a wonderful Faith, to give all Glory to our dear Lord and Redeemer *Jesus Christ*, appropriating and ascribing nothing to our selves, as our selves, but blessing our most liberal Benefactor for every thing. And as the Luminaries of Heaven (supposing the *Sun* to be the only

Lucid

Lucid and Shining Body, and all the reſt, as well Planets as fixed Stars, to borrow their Light from Him) if they were endow'd with Reaſon, none of them could be Proud, becauſe they are Luminous, neither could they Deſpiſe any leſſer Star, but ought to give Glory to the *Sun* for all their Light which is owing to him; and the more they receive, they ſtill ſtand the more indebted to the Sun for it: So the Creature, the greater Store of Virtue, Gifts, and Graces, it receives from the High and Glorious Trinity, by the Merits of the Humane Nature of the Eternal Word, ſo much the more ought it humbly to acknowledge the Original, Source, and Cauſe of its Light; and ſo much the more ſhould it behold and conſider its own Nothingneſs and Darkneſs without the Light of *Jeſus Chriſt*. And likewiſe it muſt not deſpiſe any other Creature, that ſeems not to have ſuch a Meaſure of Perfection as it ſelf, ſeeing whatſoever the better Soul poſſeſſes, is of God, and is the Fruit of the bitter Paſſion, and Blood of the Great Son of God made-Man for us. Therefore the Soul that has received Benefits and Endowments ſhould acknowledge all its Good and Virtue to come from him, and ſhould live moſt humbly, and be annihilated in its own Eyes, and fill'd

The Second is the Love and Gratitude we owe to the Humane Nature of Jesus Christ, in consideration of this.

with Thankfulness to its Lord, and ought absolutely, and in every thing, to depend upon him.

6. The other Virtue, which arises from the full and compleat Understanding of this above-mention'd Doctrine, is a lively, ardent, and most just Charity, or internal Love, and Gratitude, towards this Lovely Word made-Man. I must own to you, that this Thought has several times come into my Mind. O My God! how inexpressible is that Love, which Angels and bless'd Spirits shall bear to the most bless'd Humane Nature of *Jesus Christ*? When the Happy Spirits shall see themselves set down in that Immense Ocean of Glory, that is, in the unspeakable Divinity of God, One in Essence, and Three in Persons, and when they assuredly perceive themselves to enjoy That Good which comprehends all others; and which infinitely surpasses them, and which can satisfy all their Desires: When they see, that this Excess of Blessedness shall last for an endless, immoveable, and immutable Eternity; nay, when they discern this happy State, which wholly takes its Rise from the Sacred Merits of God made-Man, and that even their Co-operation (a thing indeed necessary to Salvation in those that are of Age) could not have

have been made effectual without the Grace of *Jesus Christ*; Alas! who then shall ever be able to express, with how much Ardour and Fervency of most vehement and intense Love the whole Train of blest Spirits have Lov'd, do Love, and shall Love to all Eternity, the Humane Nature of *Jesus Christ*, the sweet Original of their so great Happiness? But because the Grace and Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and Virtue, are the Seeds of Glory, to a Soul, which in due time shall enjoy the precious Beatifical Fruit thereof to all Eternity in Heaven; therefore the Love that a Just and Righteous Soul bears to the Son of God made-Man, cannot but be Excessive, its Gratitude Unspeakable, and its Returns of Thanks Continual, and full of Love. And as a Soul, which seeth that no real Virtue, or Supernatural Gift, proceeds from it self, meerly considered as such, becometh humble, and deeply annihilated in its own Eyes, as *Jeremiah*, who said, *I am the Man who have seen my Poverty*, just so it confesses its Poverty and Barrenness of every Thing that is Good; after this manner, on the other hand, a Soul finding in its self a Fulness and Deluge of Gods Benefits, of Virtues, Gifts, and Graces, which are the Riches and Treasures of Eternity and Happiness; and seeing that Lam. 3.

ſo many Benefits draw their Original from its moſt Gracious Redeemer *Jeſus Chriſt*, it is all melted, conſum'd, and reſolv'd, into lively Deſires of Loving him, of being all his, Imitating him, and of Approving it ſelf to Him, to do whatſoever will be pleaſing to him, or whatſoever will tend to his Honour and Glory.

Hope and Purity of Intention.

7. From theſe Two Virtues, we may alſo ſee a Third produc'd in a Soul full of the Love of Chriſt, which is a Great *Hope*, and a brave and generous Confidence, by which it (*leaning*, as the Spouſe in the Canticles, *upon her Beloved*) aims at, and aſpires to high Virtue and Perfection. Neither is it mov'd to that by Self-Love or Intereſt, but becauſe it ſees That to be for the Pleaſure and greater Glory of its beloved Chriſt: Juſt as an Affectionate Wife would wiſh to be ſo beautiful and fine, as thereby to pleaſe and ſatisfie her Husband the more; and ſhould be ready to lay aſide all her Ornaments, when ever this ſuited with his Humour, becauſe ſhe loves not Beauty and Comelineſs, as her own Excellency, but as a Thing that is acceptable to her only and well-beloved Spouſe. And this Purity of Intention is of the greateſt Importance, and ſo much worth, that I judge it impoſſible ever to arrive at true Perfection without it: For which reaſon

Cant. 8.

ſon, I reſolve to write you a ſhort Account of it in my next.

LETTER III.

To the ſame ——.

1. *The Uſefulneſs of General Leſſons applied to Particular Caſes.* 2. *What Intention is.* 3. *Five Conditions requir'd to make a Work perfect.* 4. *Theſe Conditions verified in Chriſt our Saviour, and how.* 5. *The Excellency of the End that Chriſt gain'd by his Merits.* 6. *And the Perfection of the Means which He us'd.* 7. *The Fruits that Spring from his Paſſion.* 8. *And the Excellent Method he took to deſtroy Sin.*

The great Advantage of this General Doctrine apply'd to Particular Caſes.

I Pray you, O Soul, that you would earneſtly lay to Heart, and conſider, the Doctrines which I am to lay before you, and that you would be at the Pains to Practiſe them faithfully, and apply the General Rules, that I offer you, to your Particular Actions. 'Tis the Property of General Things, to have a number of Particulars couch'd in them: So that he, who has once Learn'd one General Leſſon, and knows well how to

apply it to Particular Caſes, would wonder to ſee it of ſuch Extent and Largeneſs, as to prove a Guide and Directory to a great many Particular Actions. Let this General Propoſition of *Thaulerus* be one Example for all: *God will not be the Reward of any of theſe Actions, whereof he is not the End.* Dear Soul, if you would deeply engrave this Maxim in your Heart, and diligently obſerve, if God, or any other Thing is your End in each particular Action of yours, and as ſoon as you have ſeen, that your ſelf, or ſome other Creature, is the Scope of your Projects and Labour; if, I ſay, you would conſider, that God will not be the Wages of it, and thereupon ſpeedily diſentangle your ſelf, change your Purpoſe, and ply your Lord God, who can tell, how much, and upon how many Occaſions, this Doctrine, that is ſhort in Words, tho' univerſal and general in Signification, might prove Advantagious and Saving? And this naturally leads me to the Subject of *Intention*, whoſe Duty it is to have an Eye upon the End in the Means. I muſt therefore give you an Account of it.

Intention, what it is.

2. Intention (according to St. *Thomas*) is an Act of the Will, which bends and aſpires towards the obtaining of an End by proper and ſuitable Means, and which

which in them directs both its Desires and Endeavours towards that End. So that if the Question were put to one, who is taking a nauseous Draught of Physick, what his Meaning or Intention were for so doing; he would answer, That he thereby intended the Recovery of his Health. 'Tis therefore with this Intention the sick Man drinks his Potion, and endures many, and even sometimes cruel and cutting Bodily Pains; because he wishes to compass his End, which is Health: And all the Reason he brings for using Means naturally disagreable, is that he may come at the End which he has in his Veiw. So that if he should discover his Means to be Defective, and not answer his Purpose; he would quickly cease to make any further use of them.

3. This being once fully understood, I make not the least Question, but you will allow that the last, total and beatifical End of a Rational Creature, is God, and therefore it is, that *our Heart is never easy, till it resteth in God.* 'Tis also certain, that the more Noble the End is which one proposes to himself, and with how much the more Piety and ardent Love he sets about it, and the more he useth Means proportionable and proper to the Attainment of it, so much the more perfect shall the

The End of a Rational Creature.

S. Aug. l. 1. Confes. c. 2.

Five Conditions are required to make an Action fully perfect.

the Action be. If you would therefore come up to a ſolid and Chriſtian Pitch of Perfection for the greater Glory of God, (*who takes Pleaſure in his Servants, and whoſe Delight is with the Children of Men*) it is needful that theſe Five Conditions grace and adorn every one of your Voluntary Actions.

The First Condition.

1. Whatſoever we do or ſuffer, whether from without or within, and in all the Acts of our Will, let us aim at the moſt Noble End, that is, God his Glory, and the hallowing of his Name.

The Second.

2. Let this Chief End be purſued in the moſt Noble manner that is poſſible, namely, without a mixture of Inordinate Self-Love, or low and baſe Affection to the Creatures, and without regard to our own Intereſt; but purely for the greater Glory and Satisfaction of God himſelf. We muſt not be Lukewarm, or ſlack in our Purſuit after it, but go on with the Earneſtneſs and Eagerneſs of a Reſolute Soul, burning with true, unfeign'd, and pure Love; baniſhing from our Will every thing that croſſes theſe Conditions.

The Third.

3. Then towards the procuring of this Sublime End, we muſt endeavour to make choice of Means anſwerable to it, namely, the Practice of Virtue, and Maxims that are moſt Spiritual and Sublime, and fitteſt for us, as our preſent Condition, Places, Times, and Works, do re-

require. 4. And we must practise these several Virtues, in a way as perfect as possibly can be; by faithfully concurring with the Helps of Divine Grace, and employing all our Strength and Faculties that way. Hence we may easily perceive, that Christian Perfection is not a Work for Triflers, and negligent Persons; nor yet got by Chance, but requires a great, solid, serious, and continued Watchfulness of a Soul, That by weighing how excellent an Employment it is to Glorifie an incomprehensible God in it self, and to Approve it self to him, and attain to the Possession of him to all Eternity, it is very sensible, that all its Pains, Sufferings, Diligence, and Endeavours, are but little, to purchase so high and great an End. And here also we may discover, of how absolute Necessity it is to a Soul desirous of Perfection, to be inspir'd by the Holy Ghost with the Gift of Counsel, and Wisdom, to choose and apply exactly these Means, that lead it to its End. 5. Finally, that the Work may be perfect in all Points, it is requir'd, That he, who sets about the same, be not a Vile and Unworthy Person, but Noble and Virtuous; and the more he partakes of this Dignity and Excellence, so much the more of it will he communicate to his Actions and Sufferings. 4. But

The Fourth.

Christian Perfection is not the Gift of Fortune, but is obtain'd by Diligence and Application of Soul.

The Fifth.

These Conditions verified in the Humanity of our Saviour.

4. But because I intend to explain that *Motto* of my Cross, *The Imitation of Jesus Christ*, I will also give you a brief Account, to what a height Christ hath come in the Practice of these Rules, that I have described to you. Let us therefore begin with the last, and consider the Nobleness of our dear Saviour, and let this engage our Affections to him, that he hath so perfectly wrought our Redemption; and let us express our Thankfulness to so great a Benefactor in Raptures of Love. This Work of our Redemption was, above all others, the most perfect: And this first appears in the High Quality of our Redeemer. His Person is Divine; and he is the most High Word, Immense Wisdom, and Son of God, begotten from all Eternity by the fruitful Mind of the Father, and in the Fulness of Time was made Man for the Salvation of the World. His Humane Nature was conceiv'd by the Power of the Holy Ghost in the Womb of a Virgin, Nobly descended from a Royal Line. Beside, the Holiness and Virtue of Christ were unspeakable, a real and intrinsical Nobility of a Soul, not owing its Original to the Merits of any other. The Case standing thus; as to our Redeemer's Nobility, the Work of our Redemption must certainly far surpass the

Our Saviour's Nobility.

Reach

Reach of the greateſt Underſtanding, both in its Height and Excellency.

The Excellency of his End, and the perfect Way he took to compaſs it.

5. The End our Saviour ſet up to himſelf, was ſupernaturally Worthy, and Excellent; namely, the chiefeſt and pureſt Glory, Satisfaction, and the fulfilling of the Adorable Will of his Eternal Father, and God. And he intended this moſt Noble End with ſo great Perfection, that it never ſcap'd his View; nor did he ever caſt the Eye of his Soul on his own Intereſt, Delight, or Honour, but with an admirable Fulneſs of an Enamour'd Heart, did he always deſign the Honour, Pleaſure, and the Exalting of his Eternal Father. And becauſe the Redemption of loſt Mankind was committed to him, and charg'd on him, which was to be executed and fulfill'd to the Rigour of Juſtice, he therefore cloſely ply'd this End of ſatisfying God offended by Man, and that with an Intention and Vigour warmed with the Fire of his Affections: Nor would he ever give over, until he had once compleatly finiſhed it. He therefore neither omitted or neglected ſo much as one Thought, Word, Action, Suffering, or Means, that he in his Divine Nature ſaw fit to be apply'd and us'd, that This *Redemption with him* might be full, ſufficient and compleat. Pſ. 129.

6. If

Perfection of the Means which Christ used.

6. If we consider the Means that Christ made use of towards the Attainment of his Purpose; we must allow, that it is not possible to find any more agreeable to that Design. And here I would have you to take notice what the Apostle saith of him, *Joy being set before him, he endured the Cross.* It will not be amiss, to give you a Reverend Divine's Explication on this Place of Scripture, which is this: The Everlasting Father of our Dearest Saviour *Jesus Christ*, in the first moment of his Incarnation, set before him the Choice, either of Joy, or of the Cross; he could therefore have redeem'd the World by Rejoicing, and Triumphing in the midst of Holy Delights: But he turning his Back upon Joy, chose the Cross as a fitter Means to Satisfie Divine Justice that was offended for our Sins; and the Reason of this Truth seems very plain to me. It is certain, that the Creature Sins only upon the account of some Pleasure, or Satisfaction of its own Will; Sin being nothing else but an Aversion from God, and a turning of our Inclinations towards the Creature; for the Will looks not after, nor yet regards, any thing that it does not desire. It being also certain, that in the Art of Medicine, Diseases are cured by Remedies contrary to their Malignity; it naturally fol-

Heb. 12. Proposito sibi Gaudio sustinuit crucem. *Vers. vulgat. Rupert. Abb.*

follows, that the best Physick for Mankind, who have lost their Health by seeking after that which unlawfully pleases them, is to suffer Virtuous Sorrows, that they may heal Vicious Pleasures. Man chuseth that which pleaseth himself, and displeaseth God, and so Sins. *Jesus Christ* chuses what is painful to his Humane Nature, but pleases God and so he Redeems us from Sin. Consider then how adequate and proportionable a Means it was to Perfect Redemption, that Christ chose a Life, rich in Crosses, but poor in Pleasures and Delight.

The Reason why Christ chose a painful Life and Death.

S. Aug. De Lib. Arb.

7. But because it is most useful, for one who would attain to true Perfection, to understand and be heartily in love with the Mysteries of our Saviour's Humane Nature; give me leave to subjoin some few of St. *Thomas*'s Doctrines upon this Point. Let not this Discourse seem tedious, which perhaps may be of no small Use towards the Purchase of a happy Eternity; and from these Doctrines, a diligent Soul may draw the Motives and Foundations of important Devotion. A Way or Mean is so much the more convenient for the Attainment of its End, the more Conditions there are concurring in it, which are meet and expedient for that End. It was therefore the best of Choi-

Five Advantages that accrue to Man by his being redeem'd by Suffering.

Choices for Christ to have singled out a painful Life to ransom Man by, because it was rich in those Qualities that concern Man's Salvation, and his being freed from Sin.

First.

1. Because to see the True God not only become Man, but also to make himself liable to our most tormenting Miseries for the Love of us, is a manifest Demonstration of the unmeasurable Love of God towards us. And can there be any Heart, tho' hard as Stone, or fierce and cruel as a Tyger, who will not pay Reciprocal Love to an affectionate and tender God; nay, truly tender with a Love that was not sweet and easie to him; but with such a Love that, for his Darling Man, drew a Merciful God into Shame, Torments, and Death? What Hope and Love ought not to arise in our Hearts, to see the True God so much in love with Mankind, as, to speak without Hyperbole, actually to Dye for us; and if we firmly and fully rely on *Jesus*, and love him, how great shall our Perfection be?

Second.

2. Moreover, when we look upon *Jesus* as he suffered, O! what Instances do we see in him, of incomparable Obedience to his Eternal Father, of Humility, Constancy, Justice, Patience, Meekness, and other Virtues, Ingredients so very necessary to the Salvation of Man, and so

so excellently managed by *Jesus Christ!*

3. And because our Lord has not only by his Passion freed us from Sin, and from Punishment due to us, but has also merited Grace, which makes us acceptable to God; and Glory, that will make us happy; O how high an Esteem and Value ought we to put upon these Invisible Things, seeing the Immense Wisdom made-Man has done and suffered so much to procure them! He who considers with the Light of lively Faith, the Sacred Body of *Jesus Christ* torn with more than a thousand Stripes, Buffetings, and Wounds, and his holy Soul drown'd in a most bitter Sea of Punishments, and forsaken of his Eternal Father, O how vast a Conception ought he to form in his Heart, of the Horribleness of Sin, for the Remission of which, the Son of God was pleas'd to suffer so many Hardships! Of the Preciousness of Grace, that was bought at a vast Expence of the Blood of the Word made-Man! Of the Fearful Torments of Hell, and of the Dreadful Eternity of these Punishments; whilst to shut the Gates of this Abyss it cost our great Benefactor so much! And of the unexpressible Greatness and Sweetness of Glory and Happiness; whilst our Saviour thought, what he has purchased for us,

Third.

The great Value we ought to put upon invisible Things, taken from a due Consideration of Christ's Sufferings.

Fourth. not to be too dearly bought! 4. This truly Christian Knowledge must needs beget in us, an extraordinary Esteem of our Soul, and a strict Care and Watchfulness to preserve it pure from Faults, and keep it from Submitting to Brutish Passions, Humane Respects, or Suggestions of the Devil; since we see how great a Value our Lord *Jesus Christ* has put upon it. O how Sensibly should the amazing Sound of the Great Apostle's Lofty expression touch our Hearts! *You are bought with a great Price; glorifie, God in your Bodies.* Who will put so high an Esteem upon us, or who will lay out so much for us, as our dear Redeemer has done? To whom then should we devote our selves, but to God alone, nay to him only? 5. And finally, the Dignity of Man is wonderfully heighten'd by the Life and Death of *Jesus Christ*; seeing, after the First *Adam* was overcome by the Devil, the Second *Adam*, which is *Christ*, would not attack him with the Omnipotence of his Divinity, but was pleas'd to give him Battel, Rout and Triumph over him, with the Frailty and Weakness of our Humane Nature. And likewise rais'd the same to an insuperable degree of Excellency, by Uniting it to his Divine Person; and that Flesh which he took

Our Soul ought to be esteem'd above all the Creatures of this World.

1 Cor. 6.

Fifth.

took from a Virgin, by making himself our Brother, is now adored at the Right Hand of his Father above all the Choirs of Angels.

8. Give me now only Leave to add what occurs to my present Thoughts to this Purpose, and, in the last place, to demonstrate to you the excellent Purity of Intention, that shin'd through all the Life and Passion of Christ. Our Saviour came to advance and magnifie the Kingdom of God upon Earth, and to destroy the Kingdom of Sin: Let us therefore observe how perfect Methods he took to accomplish it We have already instanc'd in that Axiom of the Physitians, *One Contrary is cured by another:* Let us therefore consider how our Heavenly Physitian has cured our Diseases, and here we shall content our selves to reckon up the chiefest of them. What Pride and Self-Conceit will not vanish at the sight of the most profound Humility, Lowliness, and Annihilation of *Jesus Christ*? Behold how he was born; look how he liv'd, and died; and you will discern how our Pride is cur'd by the most humble Son of God. The Excess of Poverty that stript him with violent Hands, and made him dye naked; How lowdly does it Condemn the Covetousness of Men! And his continual Abstinence, his Gall,

Christ came to destroy the Kingdom of Sin.

Seven Capital Vices destroy'd by Christ.

Myrrhe and Vinegar, his chaſt and undefil'd Fleſh wounded and covered with Bruiſes; How do they baniſh from a Soul the Delights and Pleaſures of the Senſes, that were given us for Slaves, and very oft prove Tirants. Bleſs'd is the Man, who, after Chriſt's Example, can, not only Govern them, but alſo Tirannize over them, by a Holy Oppreſſion! What Envy can ever be able to reign in a Heart, that ſeriouſly conſiders that univerſal and moſt fervent Love of *Jeſus Chriſt*, which drew him to Suffer and Die even for thoſe who took away his Life? O moſt enlarg'd Heart of my Saviour *Jeſus*, which didſt receive the whole World into thy Boſom, that thou mighteſt feed it with thy Bleſſings and Benefits! How ſeverely haſt thou treated thy ſelf, that we might taſte of the Fruits of thy Bounty! And, O how far was our deareſt Saviour remov'd from Sloth, (that is, a Careleſneſs in Matters that concern the Glory of God) whoſe Life, Recreations, Labour, Thoughts, Prayers, Diſcourſes, Doings, and Sufferings, were nothing elſe but ſo many of the pureſt Ways of glorifying his Eternal Father.

9. I have purpoſely reſerv'd *Anger* for the laſt place, that I may make a breif Comprizal of Chriſt's many Suffe-

rings

rings, the Trophies of his conſtant and exalted Patience.

LETTER IV.

To the ſame——.

1. *All Goodneſs is in Chriſt, and how we fall into Evil.* 2. *The Roots of Sin laid open.* 3, 4. *The many Puniſhments ſuffer'd by Chriſt for our Cure.* 5. *Why our Redeemer ſuffered ſo much; and a Cordial for Souls in Affliction.*

In the Life and Paſſion of Chriſt, are Remedies againſt all Vices, and Patterns for all kinds of Virtue.

I Uſe to ſay, That the Life and Paſſion of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* is a great and ſupernatural Diſpenſary for all ſorts of Medicines, able to cure every Diſtemper of the Soul; and a Treaſury, containing all the Riches of Virtue, Holineſs, and more than Angelical Perfection. We ought therefore to keep the Inward View of our Heart fix'd upon this ſweet *Jeſus*, in whom is lodged an Antidote againſt the Poiſon of Sin; and in whom are to be found all the Pearls, to purchaſe a happy Life.

We fall into Sin two manner of way.

Man is two manner of Ways drawn out of the ſtreight Path of Virtue, into the Deſtructive Road of Vice, either

by ſomething that allures his Appetite under the ſpecious Appearance of Good; or elſe, by ſomethiug that frightens him under the colour of Evil. Whatever makes a fair ſhow in the Eyes of the Soul here below, that draws out a Reſpect from it; and this Eſteem and Value that the Soul puts upon Things, begets a Reſolution of the Will, and all other Humane Actions. O what an Advantage is it, to have our firſt Apprehenſions and Conceptions clear'd with the Light of Heavenly Truth, and not to be deluded by a Counterfeit Blaze of the Truths of this World! It is in *Jeſus Chriſt* who is the *True Light enlightening every Man*, that our Soul can be made Rich with Holy Apprehenſions, and Sound Counſels, and in him is reveal'd what is the True Good we ought to Love, and the real Evil we ought to Fear. The Caprice and Fancy of our Brain ſtyle the Evils and Diſtempers of this Body, and decaying Life, Real Evils, and their Goods Real Ones: But how widely are we miſtaken! *Jeſus* underſtood them better, who turn'd his Back upon the Multitude which would have him their King; and went to meet thoſe Companies of Armed Men, who were to hale him to unjuſt Puniſhment and Death. How fine a School, for the clear-

The neceſſity of Good Apprehenſions.

Joh. c. 1.

clearing of our Miſtakes, is the Life of our Saviour! But to be brief; I told you That we could fall into Sin two manner of ways, which are theſe.

2. We are led into Sin by Things of this World that afford us Pleaſure; and Chriſt, by avoiding them, taught us to diſengage our Heart from every thing here below, that can decoy it into a Snare, or enſlave it. O How ſhould we watch and ſtand upon our Guard, when we feel any Creature to affect us with Pleaſure! *The Creatures* (ſays the Wiſe Man) *were laid as a Snare for the Feet of thoſe who have no Wiſdom.* If the Snare offered no pleaſant Bait, it could not deceive the poor heedleſs Beaſt. Dear Soul, when a Creature yields thee any Pleaſure, guard thy ſelf againſt it; For the Devil may readily plant his Snare there. Let us therefore, Solace our Selves in God, and let him be entirely the Object of all our Pleaſure and Contentment.

The firſt Way of Sinning explain'd.

Wiſd. 14.

We are likewiſe drawn into Sin by theſe Things that grieve and diſpleaſe us in this lower World; and Chriſt, by undergoing them, taught us to bear up under them with an Evenneſs of Heart, and Conſtancy of an unſhaken and gallant Spirit. And remark a part of our Redeemer's Sufferings abridg'd in few Words, which were there-

The ſecond Way.

The Variety of Sufferings wich our Saviour underwent.

fore ſo various, that in the midſt of all our Croſſes, and painful Chances and Accidents, we might have an Object, in whom we may behold our ſelves, and from whom we may take Comfort, Patience and Courage, that we may not ſuccumb and fall under the heavy Burden of our Croſſes.

3. Our Saviour Chriſt therefore underwent all manner of humane Calamities, and by his invincible Patience and Meekneſs perfectly overcame all inordinate Sorrow, all ſort of Indignation, and itch and deſire of Revenge that might have ariſen from his unjuſt and ignominious Sufferings. 1. He ſuffered in the firſt place, by Men; and, to aggravate his Afflictions the Gentiles, Jews, Men and Women, the Chief of the High Preiſts and their Servants, the common People, his familiar Friends and Favorites, as is evident in *Judas* and St. *Peter*, all combin'd againſt him; and who can tell, but in that great multitude of Plotters, ſome might be found, who had reap'd the Benefit of his Miracles? 2 He Suffered alſo in his Freinds, who abandon'd him; in his Fame, that was torn to pieces with Blaſphemies; in his Honour and Glory, by Deriſion, Scorn, Contempt, and Reproaches that were caſt upon him; in his Eſtate, by being ſtript of his very Garments,

By whom our Saviour Suffered.

ments, that covered him; in his Soul, by Sorrow, Uneaſineſs and Fear, to ſuch a degree, that he was ſeiz'd with a bitter Agony in the Garden, and by being forſaken of his Great Father, which made him groan on the Croſs; and in his Body, by ſo many Bruiſes and Wounds.

3. And as to what concerns his Body, he Suffer'd in each of his Members apart. He endured a Crown of ſharpeſt Thorns on his Head. In his Hands and Feet, the driving of the Nailes through them, and the hanging by them; the Spitting in his Face; Buffetting, and horrible Scourging in all the reſt of his Body. He ſuffered in all his bodily Senſes; in his Touch, a number of Bruiſes, and moſt painful Wounds; in his Taſte, the bitter Draught of Gall and Vinegar; in his Smell, the noiſom Place of *Calvary*, where he was crucified; in his Hearing the Outcries, Deriſion, and noiſy Tumult of the Unfriendly and ſpiteful Mob; and in his Seeing, to behold his ſorrowful and languiſhing Mother, and his dear St. *John* and *Mary Magdalen* ſunk in Grief, that could admit of no Comfort, and to ſee the unmannerly and rude Affronts his Enemies put upon him. But he ſuffered a great deal more (as moſt grave Authors affirm) by the terrible Apparitions, with which *Lucifer*, him-

His Bodily Suffering.

himſelf, with his Monſters, tried (but in vain) to frighten him for the ſpace of theſe three dark Hours, that our Saviour hung on the Croſs for our Salvation. So many and divers Afflictions did the moſt patient Lamb of God undergo; foreſeeing very well, that Man would prove unthankful to ſo many Torments, and ſo much Love and Mercy.

4. And becauſe all ſorts of Afflicted Perſons may find their Comfort in Chriſt, allow us to inſtance in a few more of the Sharp Ingredients, whereof his bitter Paſſion was compounded. Our Redeemer ſuffer'd at the Bench, and every where elſe, by the Eccleſiaſtical and Secular Judges: He was charg'd with Pride, Blaſphemy, Seducing of the People, Ambition, Rebellion to *Cæſar*, and with the Uſurpation of Divine Honour. He ſuffered by falſe Witneſſes, and they took an occaſion of Reproaching him from his own Words. He was abus'd, and underwent the Character of a Malefactor, and a Fool. He Suffered by impious Wretches, and by thoſe who made Profeſſion of Fearing God; who, upon his account, would not enter *Pilate*'s Judgment-hall, leſt they ſhould have been defil'd thereby. And he ſaw himſelf ſlighted, and a Robber, Murderer and Seditious Perſon prefer'd before him.

Other ſorts of Sufferings.

5. The

5. The Son of God endured these and other kinds of Sufferings, that the Afflicted staying themselves on him, might have wherewithal to Comfort themselves; and those that are tempted with Impatience, and who fall off from Virtue, for fear of Sufferings, might have Ground for taking Courage, remaining Constant and Invincible amidst all Distress and Sorrows, and losing their Lives sooner than Virtue, Grace, or the Love of God. Most dear Soul, can any Affliction or Cross come upon us, that has not been Sanctified by *Jesus Christ?* How can you then let your self be over-ruled by Faults amidst your Sufferings, seeing they were sanctified by your Saviour, and inflicted by the Divine Providence, that you might thereby become Holy, and not that they should prove an occasion of your Sin? *Let us look unto Jesus the Author and finisher of our Faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the shame: and is now set down at the right hand of the Father. For consider him who endured such contradiction from Sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against Sin.* Such were the Sentiments of the great Apostle St. *Paul*; and, dear Soul, we ought to consider these Catholick Truths at

Why Christ suffered so much.

Heb. 12. 2.

at the bottom, and ground our ſelves on them; we ought to devote our ſelves to the perfect *Imitation of Jeſus Chriſt*, which I will explain to you, by making a brief Recapitulation and Expoſition of what I have written to you at divers Times, and in ſeveral Letters.

Letter V.

To the ſame——.

1. *The Goodneſs of any Action, proceeds from the Grace and Charity of the Perſon that acteth.* 2. *The Intention is conſidered, and that God muſt be the End of all our Actions.* 3. *The ſeveral Sorts of Intention.* 4. *What Righteous Intention is.* 5. *Pure Intention, and its Effects.* 6. *Difficult Means are meeteſt for pure Intention.* 7. *The Mask of Self-Love is taken off, and the true Means of Perfection demonſtrated.* 8. *How we muſt behave our ſelves in uſing theſe Means that are pleaſant to us.* 9. *Conditions requir'd for the making good uſe of them.* 10. *What the higheſt degree of Intention is.*

Rom. 8. 29. 'TIS certain, by the Teſtimony of the Apoſtle, that *all thoſe* who are *Predeſtinated*

destinated must be made conformable to the Image of the Son of God: It is therefore equally certain, that it must be the Chief Care, and Principal Endeavour of one, who earnestly desires to be reckoned amongst the number of those, to keep the Eye of his Soul closely fix'd on the most holy Original, Christ, to draw in himself as resembling and perfect a Copy of it, as possibly can be done by Divine Grace. We have then thus far foreseen the Conditions that have Imbellish'd and Graced all the Works of Christ; and we must do what in us lies to adorn our own with the like Qualities. Christ was the noblest of all Agents; and the most perfect Nobility of the Soul proceeds from his Virtue and Holiness: Let therefore the Inward Purity, and Candour of our Conscience, be the Fundamental Condition of our Acting and Working; And the *Lord had respect to Abel and to his offerings, but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect.* Respect from God is his Approbation and Love; but he never approves or loves the Gifts, unless he has first in his Mercy accepted the Giver. *Abel* and his Oblations were accepted by God; and the cause of his being so, came from his Innocence, and because he was Upright. *We should not have so great*

The chief Care of a Christian is to imitate Christ.

Good Works are founded on the Purity of a Soul.

Gen. 4.

Rusbrock.

a regard to what we do, as what we truly are: For were we good in the inward Man, our Actions ſhould be likewiſe good. And if we were righteous at the bottom, our Actions ſhould be ſo too. Many place Holineſs in good Works, but never ſo much as dream, that it conſiſts in being poſſeſs'd with a Principle of Sanctity. Let our Works appear never ſo holy, yet they do not Sanctify us ſo far as they are Works, but in proportion as we are Godly, and as they ſpring from the Center or inward Bottom of a Holy Soul. 'Tis a Holy Heart which Sanctifies every thing we ſet about; and that Man is Holieſt, whoſe Soul is beſt repleniſhed with the Grace and Love of God: And his Works are ſtill the better qualified, the greater Reſpect he has to the Glory of God. Our diligent Endeavour ſhould therefore be, to keep this ſecret Ground, and Center of our Soul, undefil'd aud enlarged, ſeeing without all queſtion Man's eſſential Happineſs is rooted and placed in it. 'Tis the Mind that is good, and well experienc'd in the pure Love of God, which dignifies and makes our Actions perfect, and accepted in the ſight of the Divine Majeſty. What may be drawu from this Heavenly Doctrine, is this; That ſeeing the true Goodneſs of Humane Actions does

Works never ſanctifie the Soul, but the internal Purity thereof is the thing that ſanctifies the Works.

does not consist in the natural or material Goodness of them only, but in that which is Supernatural also, proceeding from Sanctifying Grace, and from Love; these Humane Actions or Sufferings shall be proportionably good (I mean, if they be not naturally Sinful, but Righteous) by how much the more abundant Grace, and earnest and fervent Love, they are advanced to the Glory of God. Hence it comes to pass, that very oft a poor Godly Woman, who receives the Holy Sacrament with more earnestness of Love to God, deserves more than the Priest who consecrates it; and a poor (provided he be a devout) Man, has a greater Interest in Reward than many Great and Learned Doctors, who shine by their Preaching, and ingenious Performances, like so many Suns in the Church of God; and that because the greater measure of Love makes the Action that is meanest in it self to become the holier of the two: And therefore the Sanctity of the Agent, is the Root and Foundation of holy Actions.

The Greatness of an Action does not Entitle it to the greater Goodness, but when it is performed with the greater Love to God.

2. But because every thing is done with respect to some set Purpose, it therefore follows, from what has been said, that a Sublime End is very necessary to render our Performances the more Noble and Per-

The Intention is handled at large.

Perfect. And here it falls naturally in my way to Reason more clearly about Intention. Let us lay for a solid Foundation of our Discourse, that great Sentence of the Holy Ghost, who says, *The Lord made all things for himself*, and he is the *Beginning* of all Things, because he created them: And the *End*, because he is the most Universal, Chief Good, to whose Glory all Things are design'd. And because it is the property of the End to influence and determine the Agent, so far as the End is good, or at least supposed to be so, God therefore being All Goodness, without whom it is impossible there could be any, it is necessary that he should be the End of every Agent and Action. And as God is All-mighty, without whom there is no Power, he must consequently be the Beginning of every thing that has Being, or Power; and he who would think, that any thing deriv'd its Begining from any Creature (excepting Sin, which properly has no real Being, but is a Defect and Privation of Virtue, and therefore cannot challenge the Great and Chief Being for its Author, but the Creature only:) And as he, who would not own God for the Principle of every Thing, would Sin heinously; so he who will not have God to be the last End of Himself and Actions,

Prov. 16.

Rev. 1.

God must likewise be the End of all our Actions

falls

falls into a horrible Error and Sin. It is therefore highly neceſſary to propoſe our Chief Infinite Good for our End, and for that of all our Actions; as the Apoſtle has clearly taught us, ſaying, *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.* That is, (as a Reverend Divine expounds it) *Direct all things to the Honour and Glory of God as to their laſt End, and deſign always his Praiſe and Glory. As all good Things did Spring from him, as from their Fountain, ſo they muſt all flow back, and be refer'd to his Glory, Praiſe, and Honour.* And here we may very fitly apply the Maxim of *Thaulerus*, which I mention'd to you, namely, That *God will not be the Reward of thoſe Actions, whereof he is not the End.* If a Husbandman ſhould dreſs all the Vines of the World, but yours, you were not on this account bound to reward him; becauſe you were not the End of his Labour. O Soul! have a chief Regard to every one of your ſmalleſt Thoughts, becauſe their End muſt reward you. But what Retribution can you receive from one who is not God? Who can fill the boundleſs Capacity which a reaſonable Soul hath to receive all Benefits, and its unſatiable and craving Deſire of Happineſs, and of every thing that is good? God alone, I ſay, God

1 Cor. 10.

Carthuſianus.

God does not Reward thoſe Actions whereof he is not the End.

alone. Let therefore God only, and none but him, be the ultimate Beloved Aim of your Soul, and all its Operations, and of the very leaſt of your Sufferings.

Divers ſorts of Intentions.

3. Now the Intention, whereby the Soul beholds God in the Means, and bends its Inclinations to him, may be either Good, Righteous, or Pure, which others call *Simple* and *God-like*. I here addreſs my ſelf to thee, O beloved Soul, that doſt aim at Perfection, and the Imitation of *Jeſus Chriſt*; and therefore ſhall not trouble you with an account of that vicious Intention, which imploys Means that are Evil, or tho' Good, to a Sinful End. Neither will I touch upon that Intention which is Natural, or Indifferent, as of one who Eats for Eatings-ſake, or Walks for its own ſake, without advancing the Inward Aim of his Affection any farther. Such Intentions, I preſume, are baniſh'd far from you. Nor will I ſo much as mention certain barren and faint Intentions, which prove oftentimes Snares of the Devil, and ſtore Hell with many of their Vouchers. Of ſuch kind are the Purpoſes of a great many Perſons, who, whilſt they are continually committing one Sin upon anothers Back, they put on Reſolutions (at every turn) to amend their Words and Actions.

Actions, and yet, in the mean time, waſte and miſpend their Days in pitiful Debaucheries; and add Strength to their Habits in Vice, even to the Hour of their Death: And God knows what becomes of their Souls. This is the good Will or Intention wherewith Hell is ſtor'd. But the Intention here to be ſpoken of, is that of a Soul that ſeriouſly and efficaciouſly aſpires unto God. The Intention of the Soul is good, when it acts principally for the Glory of God, and loves the Lord above all Things with a true and ſincere Affection, and ſtudies and acts with no other Purpoſe but to obey his Will. Nevertheleſs the Soul purſues alſo its own Satisfaction and Advantage, tho' in a lower degree. Here lies the defect of many fond Souls that are Beginners, when in their firſt Heats they taſte of the inward Sweetneſs of Prayer, Communion, and other good Exerciſes. Altho' ſuch Mens main Drift be to pleaſe and love the Chief Good, yet, under this Cover, they likewiſe love their own Good; which is plainly diſcover'd in that, when, depriv'd of theſe ſweet Communications, they vex and fret, and ſeek to retrieve them by a thouſand Projects. Many Worldly Perſons, and thoſe who pretend to Religion too, have this good Intention, when they with to draw

What good Intention is.

The Imperfection of Intention in Beginners.

down upon themſelves, by their Prayers, and laborious Devotions, ſome favourable Benefis, as Health, the Conveniences of this Life, Honours, aud other good Things, which they ask, but not directly, in reference to God.

Right Intention, what it is.

4. Right Intention is that, which by laying aſide ſuch a Variety of Objects, and ſo many ſelfiſh Proviſions, Pleaſure, and Intereſts, becomes much more Pure than the firſt; whoſe Bent inclines only to the Pleaſure and Glory of God, and to regard his Honour and Will, not only as their principal, but total Object and End. Such a Soul never omits Virtuous Actions, which it accounts acceptable to its beloved Lord, altho' it finds no Sweetneſs in them; becauſe it no more regards it ſelf, but God: Nay, tho' Hell ſhould take up the Arms of horrible Temptations againſt it, tho' the World ſhould declare againſt it with Contempt, Deriſion, Perſecution, and Reproach; or, tho' God himſelf ſhould ſeem to abandon it, in the midſt of painful drineſs of Spirit, and inward Darkneſs; yet it will run its Spiritual Race, and advance in the Practice of theſe Virtues which God requires at its Hands. This is indeed a great Symptom of the Soul's being endow'd with a Righteous Intention.

5 Yet

5. Yet this Intention is not absolutely perfect, because it labours and fights, that it may attain unto a greater Purity and entire Acquiescence in God, and the Soul has, as yet, some Ambushes of Self-Love to destroy in it self.

Pure Intention, what it is.

A pure, simple and God-like Intention, is that which is Perfect; Such was that of our dearly beloved *Jesus*, and other Servants of God, who, by fighting valiantly and incessantly against themselves and Self-Love, came to the height of the pure and most simple Love of God. This Intention considers God as God, and wills and takes Delight that he is God, and that he acts as such, that is, as a Monarch ruling without Controul. And a Soul that walks with this pure Intention, as it sees God in every thing, and far exalted above every thing; so it makes him its Abode and Resting-place. It no more desires Things in themselves, but God in every one of them, and without them all, because he alone, without the Addition of Creatures, satifies all the Desires of a loving Soul. It has a Respect to God in all sorts of Means, neither does it take any notice of them in themselves, but to see which of them is fittest for the glorifying the most high End. And if a more ignominious, hard, painful and horrible Means, is

And its Effects.

better and fitter to give Glory unto God by, than another which is more honourable, easie and delightful; the Pure and *Deiform* Intention rejects the last, and chuses the first: And you see this is to *imitate Christ, who* (as we have said) *rejected the joy, chose the Cross, despising the shame.* And this was the Employment of all the great Saints, who finding that to Suffer and toil here on Earth, are fitter Expedients for the pure Love of God, and for the hallowing of his Name, than even the lawful Honours, Delights and Pomp of this World; they have with all their Might fled from these Means, and couragiously embraced those.

Heb. 1.

Why the most painful Means are most proportionable to pure Intention.

6. But because this Point of pure Intention is Essential to Christian Perfection. I resolve to explain to you the Occasion of this last Expression; namely, That the more difficult and painful Means have a greater Proportion with pure Intention than their Opposites. Intention so far regards and Loves the End in the Means, as one Simple love (namely that of the End) must reconcile it to the Means also: And if the Soul, in any measure, loves the Means in themselves upon any Account or Condition inherent in them, and not in Subordination to the end; the Intention immediately loseth its Purity. I will illu-

illuſtrate this by an Example: Some Diſtempers happen to the Body (ſuch as Rheums proceeding from Cold, or ſome ſuch like Accident) which muſt be cur'd by Medicines that are delightful to the Taſte, namely, by Sugars and Conſerves of Apples. Other Diſeaſes come upon us, that require Medicines unpleaſant to the Taſte, and which prove very nauſeous to the Patient. If the Sick Man deſires earneſtly to be cured in this laſt Caſe, 'tis certain that when he drinks the nauſeous Phyſick, he only aims at Health with a pure and earneſt Intention; the Love of which is the only Cauſe why he drinks this unpleaſant Potion. But in the firſt Diſtempers, Man making uſe of ſo delicious Means for the Recovery of his Health, O how probable is it, that, beſide the Love of the End, the Love of ſo Pleaſant Means may likewiſe prevail upon him to uſe them! And thus the Intention is no more pure, becauſe, beſides the Love of the End, the Sick Man has likewiſe a Niceneſs of Taſte, which is charm'd with the ſweet and delicions Means over and above: But when there is nothing ſavoury or taking in the Means, then may the Agent uſe them with the greater Security; becauſe the only Love of the End ſets him on working. And this is

the Reaſon why our bleſſed Saviour choſe Means ſo diſgreeable and unpleaſant to his inferiour Will, that he might glorifie his well-beloved Father, and redeem his Darling Mankind; and this Means was his Life, and Death, which were Poor, Abject, Sorrowful, and Crucified.

7. Now here our Self-Love is diſcover'd and brought to light; which, tho' it take up with ſo deſirable an End as the Glory and Will of God, upon which our immortal Happineſs depends; yet notwithſtanding it will not comply with the fit and proper Means to obtain it, which are (and we muſt reſolve upon it, ſeeing there is certainly no other way than) the

Matth. 16. *Denying our ſelves*, the Mortification of our irregular Appetites, Judgment and Will, and the Union, (tho' with a force on our Rebellious Senſes) an Union, I ſay, and Concurrence with, and Submiſſion to, the Diſpoſitions, Precepts, Counſels, and Diſpenſations of Providence and the Will of God, of our own Rules and Conſtitutions, and of our Superiours, whatever our Profeſſion may happily be; and briefly to

Luke 9. *take up our Croſs daily, and follow with greateſt Ardency the crucified Jeſus.*

How we muſt behave in making uſe of pleaſant Means.

8. But if Neceſſity obliges us at any time to uſe Means that gratifie, or are honourable to our Humane Nature, how muſt

must we carry our selves in such a Case? I Judge it convenient to reflect on some Conditions, that we may not lose the Purity of Intention. The first is, That we should accept of this Means, that is agreeable to our Senses, or to our Selves, meerly upon the account, that it is necessary for the Glory of God; neither can we do otherwise, if we resolve to comply with the Will of God. The Glory and Will of God ought to constrain us to make use of this Means, which in it self could please our Humane Nature, and we (as far as we are able) should resist and offer Violence to our Honour and Delight. In this manner, *Moses* (*as Gregory* the Great observes) being call'd by God in the burning Bush, to be the Leader of the People of *Israel*, and to be, as it were, a God to *Pharaoh*, was astonish'd at the Glory and Honour tender'd to him, and says, *O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send: because I am not Eloquent, and since thou hast spoken to me, I am become slower of speech, and of a slower tongue.* But when he saw it was the express Will of God, he submitted himself, and executed it. This Example was renewed by St. *Gregory*, *Ambrose*, *Augustine*, and by many in latter Ages, who being called to the highest Dig-

First Condition.

Exod. 4.

Dignities of the Church, have ſtriven, as much as in them lay, to avoid all ſort of Grandure, or honourable Poſts, and only accepted of them out of a forc'd Compliance and Obedience to their Superiours. And others came ſo far, as utterly to refuſe and decline them.

Second. 9. The ſecond Condition is, Not to pleaſe our ſelves with thoſe Means which are honourable and delghtful to us, merely becauſe they have ſuch Qualifications; but ſtill to mortify our Complacency, which (if we be not Circumſpect) would prevail upon our Nature, and become habitual. *Third.* The third Condition is, That we take as much of theſe Means agreeable to our Humane Nature, as is proportionable to their End, the Glory of God, and the Good of our Neighbour, and reject what is over. And, in the laſt place, *Fourth.* the fourth Condition is, To be ready to reſign that Means that offers us Satisfaction, as ſoon as the Action to which it was ſubſervient comes to ceaſe; ſeeing we only at firſt entertained it with reſpect to the good Pleaſure of God. St. *Gregory Nazianzen* did act after this manner, when he renounced the See of *Conſtantinople*; and ſaw, that it was no longer the Will of God that he ſhould live any longer in that high Poſt. And theſe four Conditions

Conditions may be reduced to Practice, even in ſmall Matters; as, in Eating, Apparel, and other daily Actions: In which, it is good to chuſe (when it can be ſo done) rather that which is rugged, than what is ſmooth and eaſy, what is difficult, deſpicable, painful and poor, than what are Contraries to theſe, and agreeable to Senſe. But when any Perſon is obliged to eat well, to be ſumptuouſly cloath'd, and to be rich, if he deſires withal to be perfect, let him ſtrive to apply theſe four Conditions to his Practice, and he ſhall reap no ſmall Advantage from them.

The higheſt degree of Pure Intention is plac'd in a pure Indifferency of the Soul.

10. But the Degree of Perfect Intention ſeems to me ſo ſublime, that I will not defraud this Treatiſe of the Apoſtle's Deſcription of it, in theſe Words. *But in all things approving our ſelves as the miniſters of God in much patience, in afflictions, in neceſſities, in diſtreſſes, in ſtripes, in impriſonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in faſtings. By pureneſs, by knowledge, by long ſuffering, by kindneſs, by the holy Ghoſt, by love unfeigned. By the word of Truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteouſneſs on the right hand and on the left. By honour and diſhonour, by evil report and good report*, together with what follows to admiration. The Soul therefore

2 Cor. c. 6.

that

that is like God, overcomes every thing, and aims at God alone, and with equal Freeneſs, Impartiality and Tranquility, applies theſe Means that draw it moſt ſtrongly to its beloved God; and it does not willingly reflect upon the quality of the Means. So that it enjoys the ſame perfect evenneſs and compoſure of Spirit, whether it be with its beloved Chriſt on Mount *Tabor*, *or Calvary*; in *Simons Matthews*, and *Zaccheus*'s Entertainments; and in the Garden of *Gethſemane*; or in the Palaces of *Anna*, *Caiphas*, *Pilate*, *and Herod*. It is not ſo much concerned about any thing as to love and Sanctify its God, Moreover, it makes no diſtinction of its Condition, nor yet obſerves, if it be honoured or ſlighted, careſs'd or chaſtis'd: Provided it can glorifie its beloved God, and fulfil his Divine Will; it puts no other Difference betwixt the Means, unleſs to ſeek out thoſe that are beſt proportion'd to the Will of God. And if it could glorifie God more, by Means that are leſs honorable to it ſelf, it would not value its own Honour; and, with a great freedom of Spirit, would make uſe of the fitteſt Means, tho' they contributed to its Honour. Such a Soul is like the Sun's Beam, which, ſtriking upon the Flowers and Dunghills, neither contracts a Scent from

See S. Fr. de Sale's Love of God, p. 2. b. 4. c. 5.

from those, nor a Stench from these. Few Souls attain to this Purity, therefore it is safest to embrace the Cross.

Letter VI.

To the same ——.

1. The Worth of Works that are wrought with a Pure Intention, 2. And what we must do to obtain it. 3. Another way to compass it. 4. How the Saints love God. 5. Why Pure Love is call'd Deiform. 6. The Love of those that are on the Journey to Heaven must not be slow and lazy. 7. What the Method is that they must take, for choosing of Means to act by. 8. How it becomes us to walk after the Example and Doctrine of Christ, and rid our selves of the Esteem and vain Opinion of the Things of this World. 9. What sort of Esteem we ought to pay to Bishops. 10. Some Evangelical Maxims most useful for Practice.

DEarly beloved Soul, this Treatise of the Imitation of our Lord *Jesus Christ* is of such Importance towards your Perfection, that I cannot give the least Respite to my Pen, but must begin afresh to write to you, when the least Vacation or Leisure offers. 1. I

The great Worth of Works done with a Pure Intention, tho' they be small.

The great Worth of Works, tho' small, if they be perform'd with a pure Intention.

1. I cannot sufficiently express the Worth, that Perfect Intention, adds even to the meanest of our Actions. *There are some Souls,* (says St. *Francis de Sales*) *who do little, tho' this be with so holy a Will and Intention, that they make a wonderful Progress in Love. Their Talent is but small, yet they improve it so faithfully, that the Lord rewards them bountifully.* And, *St.* Geltruda *was fully convinc'd, that how oft a Soul looks with a devout Intention upon Jesus Christ crucified, so many ravishing Glimpses of God's most bountiful Mercy reflect back upon it. And such a Soul, like a bright Looking-Glass, receives a most delectable and beautiful Image reflected from Divine Love, to the Joy and Satisfaction of the whole Court of Heaven, and to its own Immortal Glory. She was likewise satisfied, that it is a Thing acceptable to God, and that shall be rewarded, if one should do nothing more but lift up one Feather from the Ground, or walk one Step, with an intention to love and glorifie God thereby.* How then shall it fare with Souls that are loaded and replenish'd with the pure Love of God, who make it their Meat and Drink to sanctifie him in themselves and their Neighbours, and act and suffer much with a great Purity of Intention, and with a lively and vehement Affection of Love? Who can utter the Pitch of Sanctity, to which

which they are advanced by the way of pure Love?

2. But if you would have a Practical Method, and what is easy to be learnt, (but it will not seem easie to be put in Practice, to some lukewarm and cowardly Souls) I intend to instance in one, taught by the devout *Blosius*. *If thou wilt truly please God, and come up to the excellency of loving Him, thou must continually and watchfully take heed to thy self in all thy Doings, Words, Thoughts, Affections, Sufferings, Senses and Behaviour; by checking and mortifying thy Vices and wicked Lusts, as much as is possible, for the Love of God, and by restraining thy self from every thing thou knowest to stand in opposition to his Will. Look purely upon God,* (here lies pure Intention) *and his Honour, Glory and Will, in such a manner as they may move thee to do any thing, rather than thy own Will or Satisfaction. When thou perceivest thy self to desire any thing by thy own Choice or natural Desire, or to seek thy own Advantage, countermand thy self in it; resign thy Will to God, and cause it to desire what it ought, but by better Means, that is, because it is a Thing willed and desired by God, and agreeable to him who is worthy of all Obedience, and rejoyces exceedingly in every upright Action, which thou dost with such a pure Intention. Before thou begin thy Work*

A Practical way of attaining to Pure Intention.

Work which thou intendeſt, firſt lift up thy Inward Veiw, and fix it upon God; and when thou ſeeſt, that thou wilt do it becauſe God will have it ſo, and becauſe it is acceptable to him, then, in ſuch a Caſe, begin it; being ready not to do it, or to give it over, if thou kneweſt that it would not pleaſe God. When any Adverſity befals thee, take it not from any thing, but the Hand of God; and learn to bear it humbly and patiently, in Contemplation of the Pattern of that Lowlineſs and Meekneſs which thy meekeſt Jeſus Chriſt has ſet thee. Deſire heartily, that the moſt acceptable Will of God may be ſtill fulfill'd in thee. Thus far the Doctrine of that admirable Man is very Weighty, and the Worth of it cannot be well known by one who labours not to put it in Practice. I purpoſely ſaid *Labours*, that being the very Expreſſion of this Reverend Divine, who warns us, *That Vices cannot be perfectly rooted out, nor Virtue purchas'd, without a hot Combat, and a zealous Violence grounded on the Grace of God.*

Another Way to come to the Purity of Intention. Pſal. 25.

3. And if you will have me likewiſe to give you my Opinion, and ſhew you the Way how to arrive at this Purity of Intention; I ſhall do it in the Words of the Pſalmiſt, *Mine eyes are ever looking unto the Lord: for he ſhall pluck my feet out of the net.* If God, who is Omnipotence and Love,

Love, is pleas'd to engage himself for our Deliverance from Snares and Dangers, and would have us to fix the Eyes of our Souls and the Affections of our Hearts on him; Why then will we not (by renouncing and discountenancing our selves) be constrain'd with an ardent Faith to look unto him, who is all Goodness, nay the Excellency of Goodness? And if so, he is Loveliness it self, and the Excellency thereof. Neither does he need the Creatures, as Ornaments to make him Lovely to a Degree; but he alone, without relation to any Creature, considered as from all Eternity, and before the Creation of the whole World, is so eminently and infinitely Amiable, that his own Love is only proportionable to himself. And our God, purely considered in himself, is so lovely, that tho' he would annihilate all the Creatures, both of Heaven and Earth, for some hours, (which never shall be) yet they ought not to diminish or abate the least Spark of that entire Love, which they are obliged to pay him, who is Lovely in the highest Degree.

The immense Loveliness of God considered in himself, and without respect to the Creatures.

4. Blest Souls, who clearly behold his infinitely-great Perfection, are not induc'd to his Love mainly for the Sweetness, which redounds to them from the Divine

How the Saints love God.

Essence; but they see that God himself is the true and first Cause of Love, which must carry them to God: Therefore put the Case, that they could behold him, and love him without tasting of his Sweetness; yet they would be constant and unchangeable in prosecuting the Duty of Love. And if it were possible that they could love God more, at the Expence of enjoying him less, they would chuse the lesser Fruition of him, or none at all, nay even a considerable Punishment, upon Condition they could abound in the Love of that God, who is incomprehensibly lovely.

The Way that a Soul must walk by to attain the Purity of Intention.

5. Let the Soul therefore, that aims at Simple Intention, exercise it self in these Considerations, which I have briefly hinted, and in this Method of loving God; and beware of turning the Intention of its Voluntary Affection back upon it self, no, not upon its Spiritual Interest, its Honours, Greatness, or Delights; but let it act and do as if the World were not as yet created, and as if it were not sensible of having any Being, but only the Power of loving, serving, and glorifying its most amiable God. Let all its Spiritual Life, all its Affections, Endeavours, Desires, Labours, Sufferings, Living and Dying, be confined to, and comprehended in

these

these four Words of Jesus Christ, *Hallowed be thy Name.* This is an Abridgment of Holiness. This is the Employ which the Seraphims and blest Spirits continually drive, who incessantly sing in that Eternal Rest, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, To him be Glory for ever and ever.* Rev. 4.8. & 1.6.

6. This so upright, simple, pure and intense Love, is properly call'd *God-like*, because it moulds and transforms the Soul into the likeness of *God*; who (according to St. *John*) *is Love or Charity.* But as the most high God, by his Complacency in himself, breaths and sends out an infinite, uncreated and coeternal Love, which is the *Holy Ghost*, and with the Holy Spirit loves himself, Us, and all Creatures; so the God-like and perfect Soul, with the same charitable Affection, (which is a Participation of uncreated Love; for *the Love of God is spread abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost*) takes Delight in God, and the Creatures, whom he graciously favours and countenances, and is thereby made like unto God. And because the Lover rejoyces in the Good of what he loves, hence it is that the perfect Soul takes Pleasure in its Chief Good, who is God, and is mightily pleased and satisfied with the various and

Why the Love of God is call'd God-like.

1 Joh. 4. 8.

Rom. 5. 5.

unequal Distribution of Gifts and good Things which he bestows upon the Creatures. Wherefore the Soul, seeing that the greatest Share of Benefits was communicated to the holy Humane Nature of *Jesus Christ*, loves *Jesus* made-Man above all other Creatures, and rejoyces in his Glory. And as God loves whatever he has created in reference to himself, so the Soul purely refers and terminates all the Love it bears to the Creatures, in its adored and deareſt Lord and God.

7. But because we are not as yet in Possession, and happy, whereby our Love might become a pure Enjoyment, and rest in its End; but are Travellers, breathing toward our happy End; we ought therefore, as yet, to labour painfully, do and suffer, still directing our pure Intention to the uncreated Object of our Love. *The Saints in Heaven, and we upon Earth, are the same in Purity and Love: They in Fruition above, and we in Sufferings below.* For which Cause, our Love ought not to be barren, idle, or useless; but ought to awaken and draw us to those Actions, either External or Internal, and to those Sufferings, which the Glory of God, and Good of our Neighbour, have a Title to. And in these Doings, or Sufferings, we must not have a Regard to our own peculiar Advantages; but

but only to the Will of our high and most amiable God; singling out for this purpose such Means as are most fit and expedient for the Glory of the Creator and the Benefit of his Creatures, and for carrying on our Assimilation to God, and Love to him who is exceeding desirable.

How we must chuse the best of Means towards our last End.

8. And now I am come to the other part of my Discourse, and am drawing on towards a Conclusion of this (I presume) not unprofitable Treatise. We must not barely look unto the End with that Pureness of Intention, which I have briefly mentioned; but we must also seek after and chuse the best of Means towards the attainment of it. But because a great Light of Wisdom and Prudence is required for the Enquiry and Election of these excellent Means, and we must be sensible of our Ignorance and Blindness, especially in Supernatural Things; we ought therefore to seek *that true light that enlightens every man coming into this world*; which is Jesus Christ, *The Word that was made flesh for us, and dwelt amongst us, being full of grace and of truth.* The Maxim which *Isaiah* spoke concerning our Saviour, is very important, and must be a Point of our Faith, namely, That *he knew to refuse the evil, and chuse the good.* Therefore in the Election

Jo. c. 1.

Is. c. 7.

of Means towards the Attainment of our most noble End, here is the best of Rules, *To chuse what Christ chose, and reject what he rejected.*

A Collection of some Gospel Maxims.

9. It would hinder me too long, if I should take upon me a particular Explication of this Rule: Wherefore (being streightned with Time) I'll only lay down some Evangelical Maxims to you, which I judge to be most proper for your Perfection. Let this be the first and fundamental one; *That which is highly esteem'd amongst men, is abomination in the sight of God.* Luke 16. O how much is contained in this Divine Sentence of the Eternal Word, to blast and Thunder-strike all that vain Esteem which we fondly bestow upon Grandure, Sciences, Worldly Pomp, Beauty, Riches, and the Favour of Men! Apprehension and Esteem (as I have already observ'd) are the first Springs which set all the Actions of Men a going. What we don't apprehend, nor esteem Good, is not loved by us; and what we do not love, does not move us. Therefore all our Motion springs from Love, and our Love from Esteem. Therefore as long as we do not discharge our selves of the Esteem we put upon created Things (consider, this is the Fault of every one who walks not by the pure and only Light of Faith and Grace) we can-

How we must void our selves of Worldly Esteem.

cannot empty and rid our ſelves of vain Love, whereby, eſteeming them Good and Great, we dote upon them, and loving them ſo meanly, we diſorder our ſelves, and ſlide into a number of Faults. The ſame may be ſaid of the too great Eſteem we put upon our ſelves, and our own Wit, Knowledge, or Nobility, or Beauty, or Induſtry, or Strength, or Riches, or, to ſum up all in groſs, of every other Thing that belongs to us, nay even of our Spiritual Endowments, and the Gifts of God, which our Pride alſo may turn to a wrong uſe. O how far is the Poiſon of theſe Words ſpread, which the Serpent ſpoke to Eve, *Ye ſhall be like Gods, knowing Good and Evil!* God, Eſſentially, is God Omnipotent, and free to Will whatſoever he pleaſes. We think we are then as Gods, when we deſire to exerciſe our own Will, and when we put Confidence in our own Power. And we are apt to believe, that we know Good and Evil, when we truſt to our own Judgment; and will not give our ſelves up to be govern'd by the holy Scriptures, by the Doctrines and Leſſons of the Holy Catholick Church, and Doctors approv'd of by her, nor by the Rules, which we, perhaps, profeſs, nor by the Advice and Councel of our Superiors, and of other good, ſincere and prudent Ser-

And of our ſelves and our own Qualities.

Gen. 3.

vants of God. Labour hard, and exerciſe your ſelf very much in this firſt great Maxim, To eſteem That to be a Nothing, which looks great to the Eyes of
2 Cor. 4. 18. our Fleſh. *Let us not look* (ſays the Apoſtle) *to the things that are ſeen, but to thoſe that are not ſeen, for the things that are ſeen are temporal, and the things not ſeen eternal. The faſhion* or vain appearance *of this world paſſeth away.*

How the Lords of this World ought to be eſteemed.

10. But leſt you ſhould imagine, that Perſons of Quality, placed in Dignities and high Poſts, are deſpicable, and lightly to be eſteem'd (it being moſt true, that *All power is of God*) make uſe of
Rom. 13. 1. Mat. 22. 21. this Second Goſpel Maxim, *Give unto Ceſar what is Ceſars, and unto God what is Gods.* Give unto Princes, Biſhops, and Superiours what is their Due, namely, Reverence, obſequious Affection, Obedience and Tributes. But becauſe they belong to God as well as you, give them all theſe Things in reference to God, and in ſubordination to Him; never offending, on any Humane Account, your firſt and higheſt King and Lord.

Several Maxims of higheſt Perfection.

11. And to be as brief as I can, Love Humility and Meekneſs, ſeeing our Redeemer ſaid, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart,* Love rather to Obey, than Command; becauſe we read of our
Mat. 11. 29.

Sa-

Saviour, *That he was ſubject to his Parents.* Luke 2. 51. *And became obedient unto death, even the death* Phil. 2. 8. *of the Croſs.* Be valiant for Virtue. *And* Mat. 10.28. *fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the Soul.* Prefer it to the whole World; for *what is a man advantaged, if* Luke 9. 25. *he gain the whole world and loſe his own Soul.* Be a Lover of Sufferings, ſeeing he that *takes not up his Croſs cannot be a diſciple of* Mat. 16. 24. *Chriſt, nor yet can he follow him:* And he who does not follow him, cannot come where he is, in the bleſt Glory of the Father. Wean your ſelf from all created Things, either Really in as far as is poſſible, or at leaſt in Affection, and that truly and unfeignedly: *For he that leaveth and forſaketh all things for the love of Chriſt, ſhall receive a hundred fold in this world, and life eternal in the world to come.* Strive always to advance in Virtue; ſeeing that Man *who putteth his hand to the plough and* Luke 9. 62. *looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom of God.* Keep up a ſtrict and inſeperable Alliance with Prayer, ſeeing we *muſt pray* Luk. 18. 1. & *always, and without ceaſing.* Love your 1 Theſ. 5. 17. Neighbours with an untainted Affection; for our Saviour has told us, *This Command-* John 15. 12. *ment give I unto you, Love one another.* Strive to *Love your Enemies, bleſs them that* Mat. 5. 44, *curſe you, do good to them that hate you; if* & 48. *ye would be perfect as your Father which is in*

Hea-

Heaven is perfect. Nay, think your self *happy, when you ſuffer all manner of perſecutions and revilings for righteouſneſs ſake.* Never faint, nor give over your Hoſtilities, until you have gain'd a compleat Victory over your ſelf; for *the violent*
Mat. 11. 12. *man takes the kingdom of Heaven by force.* Abide conſtant in Virtue amidſt all Temptations and croſs Chances; for *he who*
Mat. 24. 13. *ſhall endure unto the end ſhall be ſaved.* And
Luke 17. 10. finally, *when ye ſhall have done all thoſe things which are commanded you, ſay you are an unprofitable Servant.* Give all Glory to God alone, your Chiefeſt Good, from whom
Jam. 1. 17. alone *deſcendeth every good and perfect gift.*

Letter VII.

To the ſame ——

Of the ſuitable Application of Good Means towards the Attainment of the End. 2. Readineſs of the Grace of God to aſſiſt Souls. 3. What gives occaſion to the Miſcarriages of good Means in the way of Perfection. 4. What muſt be done, that we may become perfect by them.

AFter I had come to a Cloſe of the laſt Part of this Treatiſe concerning theſe

theſe Words, *Conformity with Jeſus Chriſt*: I took notice that one thing had eſcap'd me, which ſhould have been fully open'd and pathetically urg'd upon you; but I deſign not to be tedious. *We are obliged not only to chuſe the beſt of Means, but alſo to apply them in a moſt ſuitable and excellent manner.* What nobler Expedients can be thought upon for the accompliſhment of Perfection, than the Holy Sacraments, and eſpecially that of the Lord's Supper? And, alas! how many, after a long frequenting of theſe Heavenly Means, advance ſo ſlowly, that they hardly arrive at the End of Eternal Salvation, and that in the loweſt Degree: And it were well indeed if this were the worſt of it; but I am too much afraid, that there are many who never come to be ſaved! Nor muſt we here ſeek for the Cauſe of it in the Means, that are ſo forcible and effectual; nor in *God* who *is* perfect *Love*; nor in Grace, that is ſo ready on its part: But ſurely the Defect lies in us, and that ſaying of *Hoſea* ſhall always be true, and of force, *Thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf.*

We ought to make good Uſe of Good Means.

1 Joh. 4 8.

Hoſ. 13.

2. And here I cannot reſtrain my ſelf from ſpeaking a few Words on this Point of Grace; becauſe many will not underſtand the true Reaſon of their bad Succeſs in it; and it ſeems, they are apt to charge it

The Readineſs of Grace to help us.

it on God, who will not give them Grace. Let them therefore be pleas'd to hear Three Wise and Holy Divines upon this Subject. *We all* (saith St. *Bernard*) *complain, that Grace is wanting to us; but it may perhaps more justly complain, that some are wanting to it. For the Grace of Devotion, which we seek after, belongs to the Heart; and whosoever refuses to surrender his Inward Habitation to Grace, defrauds himself of this Gift.* And St. *Thomas* saith, *God is ready to impart of his Grace unto all Men; because he Will have all to be saved and to come to the Knowledge of the Truth.* And 'tis the Opinion of *Bonaventure*, That *none want Grace, upon the account that Grace is wanting to them; but because they are wanting to Grace.* See likewise the Divine *Dionysius Areopagita*, the 9th Chapter of his *Heavenly Hierarchy*, which will serve to clear up our Ignorance.

From whence it proceeds, that many Souls reap but little Advantage from Good Means.

3. This Truth being therefore well understood, That God is so ready on his part to communicate his Grace unto us, and that the Means, that is, the Sacraments, and virtuous Acts and Operations, produce the increase of Grace, and that it is from its Growth that we derive our greater Holiness, and Perfection: And when we, on the other hand, evidently see the small number of Souls that are com-

compleatly perfect; and discern in so many the Sway of over-ruling Passions, and how they are glued and chain'd to the Creatures; we must conclude, that this proceeds from our Misapplication of so perfect Means. I do not here mean these *miserable* Souls, who Sacrilegiously approach the Fountains of Eternal Life, that is, the Holy Sacraments, and for their presumption, thereby drink to themselves Death, which they so well deserve. But I address my self to these Souls, who will never resolve upon the getting the upper hand of their unconcern'd Temper and Lukewarmness, and the rooting out so many useless Affections to the Creatures, from whence issue frequent storms of reeling Passions, and so many Distractions, giddy Fancies, and wandering Thoughts; and who make no Efforts against a number of lesser Sins, such as vain and idle Discourses, too much Curiosity, the mean Opinion of their Neighbours in Matters of no Moment, trifling Interest, naughty Vanities, and haughty Complacence in themselves, frequent Frettings and Uneasiness upon the account of their unmortified Nature, and their superfluous and needless Desire to have every thing according to their Mind: And other sorts of Errors, which

I ſhall not here enumerate. Theſe are the Cauſes, why perfect Means ſeem unſufficient to make us Perfect.

What muſt be done beſide the Appl cation of good Means towards the Attainment of Perfection.

4. We muſt therefore be very watchful about Two Things. The firſt is, To remember that Chriſtian Perfection is a matter of greateſt Importance, and even the weightieſt of all our Duties: It therefore requires a ſerious and continual Application, and a reſolute Heart, to mortify our ſelves impartially, in the lighteſt Vices, and in what may be diſpleaſing to the pureſt Eyes of *Jeſus Chriſt*. The Second is, That we muſt not only in the General, nor yet in our Particular Actions, barely deſign the Practice of Good Works; but even to do them well, and then better, and not give over or abate of our Induſtry, until we come to do them excellently well. Vocal Prayer is good, and Mental Devotion is a Degree better, yet we muſt pray well. Confeſſion, Communion, and the Publick Service of the Church, are good, yet we muſt perform them well. 'Tis a good thing to ſay our daily Devotions, if well perform'd. To obey, to be humble, to Suffer, to be ſilent, to watch chiefly over our ſelves, and alſo over others where it concerns us; and, to ſum up all in groſs, to exerciſe our ſelves in ſeveral Virtues, both

both External and Internal, all are very good Things, but they must be duly perform'd. Beware then, that you do nothing at Random, or by Custom; but habituate your self in all your particular Actions, to begin them by lifting up your Heart unto God, and to prosecute them with the continuation of the amiable Presence of God, and by mixing from time to time in the middle of your Work some warm and internal Acts of Love to God, and holy Hungerings after his Glory, and and to perfect and finish them well, by giving the Glory of all the Good you have done, to God the Fountain of all Goodness; and to ascribe to your self that which is your Part, namely, the Defects committed in that Work. This is a great Precept, *To Endeavour to reap Increase of Humility and Love from every one of your Actions.*

Peruse this Treatise often, and weigh each Sentence of it. Aspire at the height of it, but gently and gradually, provided your Progress be not too slow. And lastly, I advise you, (with *Joannes a Cruce*) *To have a continual Resolution and earnest Affection to imitate Christ in every thing, conforming your self to his most holy Life; which must be considered, that you may be the better*

better enabled to imitate it, and to behave your ſelf in every thing, as he did.

Letter VIII.

The Principles of Good and Evil.

To a Religious Lady.

1. *In order to Chriſtian Perfection, we muſt Do, Suffer, and Avoid.* 2. *Root of Sin, and its Remedies.* 3. *Things in Particular to be Done, Suffered, and Avoided.* 4. *The Way to be Reformed.*

1. DEar Madam, what you inſinuate is moſt true, That it puts a great Stop to Chriſtian Progreſs to be without a Director, to guide and aſſiſt us in our Doubts, and to mortifie us when we want to be mortified; but let not your Soul quite deſpair on that account. Our Lord is the true Maſter of Souls: And as he governs them by ſome one or other of his Servants as a viſible Guide; ſo he is alſo graciouſly pleas'd to ſupply the Want of a Director, with a Stock and Proviſion of his Divine Light and Illuminations, or of Letters or Spiritual Books. Let your Soul therefore, dear Madam, take

Courage,

Courage, and, after you have fetch'd Breath again, ply the Service of God afreſh, with more Vigour and Reſolution than ever. If the Queſtion were put to me, concerning what Things you want; I anſwer, They are theſe Three preciſely, which you have mentioned to me; for, in truth, all our Goodneſs conſiſts in Three Things, *To Do*, *to Avoid*, and *to Suffer*. The Soul has therefore need of Three Means; that is, Of one to teach what is to be done; Of a Monitor to rouze it into Thought and Remembrance of that which it ought to ſhun; and, Of one to ſtrengthen and fortifie it when it muſt Suffer. But ſeeing you labour under the Want of one to ſupply theſe Offices; I'll at leaſt do my Endeavour to give you ſome Satisfaction upon the Matter.

The Things required for a Good and Chriſtian Life.

2. The miſerable Portion and Inheritance, entail'd upon us by our firſt Parent *Adam*, leaves theſe Effects in the Soul, beſides many more, namely, *A Reluctancy and Averſion to Virtue, a Propenſion to Vice, and a Rebellion of Senſe againſt Reaſon, and of Reaſon againſt God.* Our greateſt Lord, Benefactor and Creator, requires of us, *The Exerciſe of Virtue, the Shunning of Vice, and good Order*; the laſt of theſe conſiſts in diſpoſing the Parts in their due Places, that is, in keeping Senſe under the Com-

The Effects of Original Sin.

God requires Three Things of us.

mand of Reaſon, and Reaſon in ſubjection to its beloved God. Now, Dear Mother, this is in expreſs Terms, what you muſt Do, and every one, who would conſult the great concern of the ſafety and Happineſs of his Soul. We muſt always ſuppreſs our Senſes, and valiantly mortify them; and fight impartially againſt the Motions of irregular Paſſions, and by honourable Force and Violence reduce them to the Obedience of Reaſon: And finally ſubmit and conform it to the will of God, by enlightening our Underſtanding with Leſſons of Faith and the holy Scriptures, and with the Conſideration of the Virtues of *Chriſt Jeſus*, and his Apoſtles and Saints; by inflaming our Will with a true, pure, upright and conſtant Love to God, our Chief Good, and to theſe Virtues that direct us to him; and by kindling in our ſelves a moſt juſt Hatred againſt Sin, and every thing that draws us aſide into Vice. And theſe things that treacherouſly ſeduce us are within us, and not deriv'd upon us from any external Cauſe. Such are the Eſteem of our ſelves, Self-Love, our own Intereſt, and the Affection we bear to corrupt Nature, which makes us to Love what pleaſes us here in this World, and ſeems to redound to our Honour, and what appears uſeful for the obtaining

What is to be done.

What Things lead us into Vice

of

of our fooliſh Wiſhes and Deſires. Theſe Words are few, but a moſt profound Meaning and Senſe is couch'd under them, and ſolid Sanctity conſiſts in the exerciſe of them: You ought therefore ſeriouſly to weigh, and endeavour to underſtand them at the bottom, and to put them in Practice.

3. Behold then what we are to Do, Avoid, and Suffer. We ought *To Do* what is morally Good, and ſuitable to our Condition and Calling, and that in a due manner, at fit Seaſons, and in proper Places. We are to ſhun Vices, the Omiſſions and Non-obſervance, or the Violation of our Laws, our inordinate Paſſions, our unbridled Senſes whether External or Internal; by not giving way to ſo many Thoughts, nor believing a number of ſelfiſh Reaſons which our Fancy obtrudes upon us, and not pampering our ſelves with the empty and uſeleſs Remembrance of the Creatures; but ſtill ſtriving to thruſt out theſe Vanities, that we may be repleniſh'd with the fulneſs of God: And in fine to *fly from* our own Opinions, and from the Deciſions of our own Underſtanding, and the Stubbornneſs of our Will. But becauſe this way is very hard and difficult to our Nature, corrupted with the Guilt of Original Sin,

What to be done.

Avoided.

it follows, that we must resolve upon *Suffering*. We must undergo the Strugglings and pressing Conflicts that we are to encounter in overcoming our selves, in mortifying of our Excesses and loose Debaucheries, and in subduing our unruly Appetites. We must suffer Temptations that are cast in our way, either by the Devil, or Men, or which proceed from our very Nature, against the Course of Life which we have taken up, for the greater Glory and Satisfaction of our most amiable God; and must commit our selves to his Divine Grace, and by no means to our own wretched Strength. How true is that saying of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, (and ought therefore to afford Matter of Joy and Comfort to the Servants of God) *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: But because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you. But know that it hated me before it hated you. Believe therefore that I have overcome the world.* And by the World here is understood all those who live and speak after the manner of the World; Exalting its Naughtiness and Vileness, as if Heaven and Happiness were sheltered under it; and undervaluing both in Word and Deed the true Ways of Virtue practis'd and taught by *Jesus Christ* and his Faithful Servants. The Devils are like-

Suffered.

What is understood by the World.

Jo. 15. 19.

likewiſe comprehended under this Denomination, who, by their Frauds, Treacheries, Snares, Force, Allurements and Artifices, govern too too much the dark World, (as St. *Paul* terms it) ſo much depriv'd of the real Light of Heaven, which is only ſeen by the Followers of *Jeſus Chriſt*. Eph. 6. 12.

The Way to be Reform'd.

4. Therefore (deareſt Madam) apply your ſelf with all Chearfulneſs and Courage to work a Change and Reformation in your Life. Examine every one of your Actions, Words, Motions and Thoughts, and endeavour to reduce every thing to the ſtreight and even Path of Virtue, and to the Imitation of your Saviour and Spouſe, *Jeſus*. Avoid every thing that may render you unlike, or contrary to this dear *Jeſus*, the bright and ſpotleſs Mirrour of Holineſs. And if you fall at any time into Miſtakes, be not caſt down; but have continual Recourſe to the moſt merciful Bowels of *Jeſus*, who is readier to grant you a Pardon, than you are to ask it; and begin again afreſh, ſtill more bravely. And finally, *Suffer* ſo far as is requiſite, and in whatſoever Condition, that you may continue ſteadfaſt in Virtue, and in the holy Love of God; ſeeing the time will come, when you ſhall Rejoyce and Enjoy without Suffering.

Your present Suffering shall cease; but that Glory which Christ has prepared for you, his dear Mistress and Spouse, shall never end, whom I pray to bless you.

Jesi, March —

Letter IX.

Of an Active and Contemplative Life.

To a Person that aim'd at Perfection in Prayer.

1. *An Active and Contemplative Life reduced to Four Heads.* 2. *The Duties of an Active Life.* 3. *And what it must undo.* 4. *And what it must do.* 5. *In the Contemplative Life God will undo.* 6, 7. *What the Mortification of the whole Man is.* 8. *Mystical Mortification.* 9. *And how the Soul ought to behave it self therein.*

An Active and Contemplative Life reduc'd to Four Heads.

THE Spiritual Life may, in my Opinion, be reduced to Four Degrees; the Two first of these are very well known; but the latter two are not so obvious and manifest. The Two first belong to the Active Life, and the Two last to the Contemplative. *To Undo, and to Do: To let our selves be Annihilated, and Renew'd.*

Nor

Nor can we probably expect to arrive at these, unless we pass faithfully through those. 'Tis the Doctrine of *Bonaventure*, and of other Spiritual Masters, and a plain and simple Truth, That the Soul must be first well train'd up in the Active Life, before it can be settled in the Contemplative one, at-least in a permanent and durable Way; and to desire to fly before we have got Wings, would be a very precipitant and heedless Course. The Contemplative Life requires, That there be in the Soul a great calmness of the Will, and a Subjection of the Passions, and a great Serenity of the Understanding, free from the Clouds of imaginary Phantasms and Thoughts. But the Soul cannot arrive at such a Perfection, without a diligent Exercise of the Active Life. *Martha* became a Disciple of our Saviour sooner than *Magdalen*; tho' *Magdalen* was afterward more beloved. Now let us see wherein these two Lives consist, and that briefly.

The Requisites of a Contemplative Life.

2. Believe not, dear *Teresa*, that the Active Life consists only in external good Works, and those that are Virtuous, and redounding to the Advantage, either of our selves or Neighbours. These are Things of lesser Concern, but those of greater Importance are the Internal Exer-

Wherein the Active Life consists.

cises, which such a Life recommends to a Soul that aims at true Perfection for the greater Glory of its Dearest Spouse. Now I reduce all its Exercise to these two small Words, *To Undo, and To Do.* And here begin the Errors of any one who would *Do* before he has *Undone*; and who is so much taken up about the *Doing Part*, that he little regards what must be *Undone*. We are, dearest Mother, born with Original Sin; and when we come to have the Use of Reason, we aggravate it with a grievous number of Transgressions. Our Faculties become deform'd, perverse and deprav'd by reason of the bad Habits that infect them. Our internal and external Senses, our Sensual Appetites and Passions, are so habituated to unaccountable and disorderly Actions, highly displeasing and offensive to the most holy Eyes of God. And in fine, our Spiritual Powers, the Understanding and Will, are also infected by the Corruptions of the Body; insomuch that the Understanding relies much upon its own Decisions, desires much Light and Knowledge, where there is no Reason so to do: And the Will loveth what it should not love, and avoideth and hateth that which is truly desirable.

The first Error of those who pursue an Active Life.

3. The

3. The Duty therefore of the Active Life, is to *Undo* and Destroy what corrupt Nature has built and fram'd, ill Habits and Customs drunk in from the World, or it matters not what other Place, for Evil is still Evil whereſoever it is to be met with, or learn'd. Moreover, we must *Destroy* the irregular Insults of our Passions, and the Commotions of a number of Desires, and a multitude of imaginary Thoughts, and the Seditious Wranglings and Disputes of Reason. And it is likewise its part to *Destroy* the Curiosity, Meanness, and the unequal motions of the Understanding, reeling and roving without any Method or Rule; insomuch that it renders it self very incapable of fixing on that One, Pure, Universal and Unlimited Truth, that can only Satisfy it. We are likewise to *destroy* our *Rational Appetite*, or the Will, which is divided amongst so many good Things; and, being still hungry, would Satisfy it self with them: But it never finds, nor shall it ever find, enough of them, until it recollect and call back these wandring Appetites and reunite them to it self, that so they may joyntly fall a Loving of, and uniting themselves with the most pure Incomprehensible Goodness, that contains all others, and infinitely surpasses them.

In an Active Life we must destroy Evil.

All

All that I have hitherto insisted upon, may be call'd by the common name of *Active Mortification of the Faculties.*

What is to be done.

4. By the word *Do*, I understand the Actual Exercise of Virtues, and especially those that are meet and proper for the State of Life which we profess. And here I must briefly advise you, That you, by all means, strictly keep to the literal Observance of your Rules and Constitutions, and give preference to that which seem'd good to your pious Founders, before whatever shall seem good in your own Eyes; whilst it hinders your perfect regular Observance: In the word *To Do* all the Moral Virtues are included; Such are Obedience, Repentance, Humility, Abstinence, Temperance Fortitude, Piety, Prayer, Prudence, Modesty, and many more, which I here pass by. Together also with the Duties agreeable to the Theological Virtues; such are the Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity, practis'd Actively; that is, how, and when the Soul is pleas'd to produce and exert them. Let what I am just now a doing be brought for an Example: I am writing and am employ'd in the Presence of God, and say thus within my self *O my Lord, thou art in me. How much Confidence will I put in thee, that thy Love will vouchsafe to countenance my poor Endeavours and Pains,*

The Exercise of Moral Virtues.

And of Theological Virtues performed Actively.

that

that they may prove useful to thy Spouse! O my God, my Chiefest Good, thou knowest that it is thy Love that induces me to write to this Virgin consecrated to thee, and that I expect nothing from her, but that she may be made the fitter to love thee, and more worthy to enjoy thee in thy blessed Eternity. And behold, I have actually exercis'd the three Theological Virtues, first *Faith*, then *Hope*, and lastly *Charity* towards God, and towards you who are my Neighbour.

But as Steel is not fit for cutting any thing whilst it is covered over with Rust, but requires to be first well Scour'd, so the Exercise of Reforming and *Undoing* is most necessary for preserving the Faculties pure, and in a fitness *for Action*; that is, for the Practice, and Acts of Virtue, perform'd after this Active Way and Manner. And believe me, we still have something or other to our very Death that wants to be *reform'd*, seeing our Earth is still sending up some Weeds that want to be destroy'd.

The Office of an Active Life.

5. Tis therefore the part of an Active Life to overcome Vices, to subdue the Senses, to govern the Passions, to rectify the Spiritual Faculties, and acquire the good Habits of Virtue; and the main and principal Duties of this Life consist in such Things as these. For when the Soul, as to its Part, is faithfull; then it is well dispos'd, and in a Condition to be raised

Contemplative Life.

by

by our Lord God to the Contemplative Life, which is ſublimer than the firſt, and carries the Soul to a higher and nobler pitch of Perfection. Here it is that God begins by various means to train up the Soul in paſſive Mortification: And this is the third Degree, *To let the ſtrong holds of ſin be deſtroyed in us.* And here begins the Error of Contemplative Novices, who would have God to *Act and Do*, before he has done away and deſtroy'd that in them which hinder'd him from Acting. God's acting in the Center of the Soul, how incomparably Sweet and Delicious is it, and how Divine are his Works and Operations there! For this Cauſe, the Soul receives him willingly and heartily. On the contrary, when God is *deſtroying the Old Man*, or working a Reformation in the lower Part of our Soul, nay even in thoſe Parts that are not ſo very deep, thereupon follows a Pain that is Tormenting and Inſupportable; which draws moſt heavy Sighs and Groans from it, and its Conſtancy is oftentimes ſhaken under the Heavenly Blows which purge and beat away its Droſs. But if it knew how much Good will redound to it from theſe Stroaks, with how much Confidence, Subjection, and ſteady Reſolution, would it endure the weight of Gods reforming hand! *This*

God's Doing and Undoing in the Soul how to be underſtood

Un-

Undoing and Deſtroying a Soul, is not meant Materially and as to the Subſtance, but a breaking its Deſigns and common Meaſures of Acting, and what it has a mind to do; and an abating of its Activity, and a cruſhing of its Appetites, and robbing it of its Multiplicity of Images or Idea's, its inward Sentiments, particular and diſtinct Light, and of its Affections employed in its own natural Way; that by this Means it may become entirely Paſſive as to ſupernatural Operations, and may let God work upon it without Reſiſtance, who will be glorified by it after his own way, and as he thinks fit. And the more Active a Soul has been in *Doing*, ſo much the more Pain will it come to endure in the Act of Regeneration.

Of Mortification, Paſſive and External.

6. God therefore applies both External and Internal Means for the Reformation of a Soul; and mortifies and purges it, as well in the Outward and Inward Senſitive Part, as in the Rational or Spiritual. Bodily Infirmities and Pains mortifie the outward Senſes *Paſſively*; as, want of Appetite mortifies the Taſte; Pains mortifie the Touch; and the Diſtempers of any other Senſe mortifie that Senſe too. Yet obſerve by the by, That one ought not to frame and draw Diſeaſes upon it ſelf, but to bear them when they are

are ſent by God. Obſerve alſo, that I pretend not by this Doctrine to teach, That a Perſon ſhould not apply lawful and requiſite Medicaments, the Uſe of which is alſo the Will of that God who hath given that healing Virtue to his Creatures.

And of the Internal Mortification of the Senſes.

The inward Senſes are the *Fancy*, which is the Repoſitory of the Phantaſms, and Images that have paſs'd through the outward Senſes; and the *Diſcerning Faculty*, where we form the Thoughts and Eſteem of Corporeal Things and Actions; and the *Memory*, that retains theſe Things that it remembers, (to omit the *common Senſe*.) Theſe Senſes are mortified by Aridities and Dryneſs, by Darkneſs and various Temptations, which damp and take off the Edge of their exceſſive Vivacity and Briskneſs; and, in a manner, forces the Soul (that finds ſo much Pain in them) to riſe above them, and to put it ſelf in a Spiritual Frame, and make it capable of the ſublimeſt and moſt ſecret Operations of Grace.

How Paſſive Mortification of the Senſes is to be prætis'd.

7. Beſide, when we are contradicted and croſſed in any thing that is deſired by Senſe, and our Delight is ſtop'd in its Career, then we ſhould rejoice in Spirit, becauſe of that Contradiction which deſtroys Senſe. When we know, that Men ſpeak ill of us, envy and injure us, vili-

fy

fy and ſet us at nought; then is the time to rejoice in Spirit, becauſe our *Opinion*, or *Eſtimative Faculty*, by which we overvalue our ſelves, is deſtroyed. When we are oppreſs'd with divers Temptations of unaccountable Idea's and Images, and our Tongues bound up with Silence, then it is time to rejoice, as the Apoſtle St. *James* tells us; becauſe ſuch Things as theſe deſtroy the Imperfections of our Fancy. When our Superiors forbid us any thing that we judge to be Good, and employ us in Things of leſs Conſequence, or that ſeem to us either almoſt, or altogether uſeleſs; then it is time to ſilence and ſubdue our Underſtanding that is too apt to judge, becauſe God is pleaſed *to humble and bring down* our private Judgment. And in the ſame manner does he deſtroy our ſelfiſh Will as oft as he gives us over to the Government of Superiors or Neighbours contrary to our Inclination, and cauſes our Deſigns and Wiſhes to fly up, be broken and daſh'd to pieces by his Creatures. How little do we underſtand theſe Methods which God uſes to *Annihilate us*, that he may *make us* Holy as he would have us! O how many Things are taken for the Reſult of Chance, or the Effects of meer Creatures, and ſo we reap no Ad-

Jam. 1.

Mortification of the Spiritual Part of our Soul.

Advantage from them; when they are really the Inventions, Contrivances and Induſtry of the Divine Wiſdom, who deſires to *deſtroy* the Imperfection lodging in his Elect, and to make them entirely perfect and worthy of himſelf! Think ſeriouſly on this Doctrine, and weigh each Word of it.

Of the Mortifying of the Spiritual Faculties after the moſt Spiritual manner.

8. Nor even does God's *Action* of Reformation ſtop here; for his Divine Grace, by Ways ſo much the more ſublime by how much the more painful and unknown they are, does utterly *deſtroy* the Activity of their Spiritual Faculties, and the Natural Way they have hitherto held by. Who can utter what Clouds of thick Darkneſs then compaſs the Underſtanding, and in what a State of Dulneſs it is! But who can give an Account of the unknown and inexpreſſible Pains the Spirit ſuffers in ſuch a Condition as this is? This moſt noble Faculty of the Underſtanding, this bright Eye of the Soul becomes as if it were blind, immoveable, ſhut up, and gall'd; and its Virtuous Operations are deſtroyed alſo, which were uſually before its Support and Comfort. It can no more (as it thinks) exerciſe theſe Acts of Faith, or other Virtues, that were ſo eaſie and familiar to it before. Nor appears it to be any more in a condition to

to hear the Divine Truths; for which Cauſe it pines away with Anguiſh and Affliction, and gives it ſelf up for loſt; and finds no Light to fix upon, or to yeild it any relief. And in effect, the Underſtanding knows not, nor can it be perſwaded, that it is in this manner Annihilated by Grace (which purifies with a ſtrong hand, in order to govern it in a ſupernatural way) wherefore its pains are moſt tormenting, ſometimes much like the firſt Degree of Helliſh Torments. It no more enjoys the uſual Preſence of God; and thinks and believes it ſelf ſo much depriv'd of it, and conceives ſuch a Grief and Sorrow at the Loſs of its Chief Good, as the Viſions and Apparitions of Angels could not in the leaſt allay, and much leſs the Comforts of Men. Hardly does it believe its Director, (who ſhould be a Man of Learning and Experience, and of a good Spirit, to have to do with ſuch Souls;) his Words and Aſſurances give, indeed, ſome Grain of Strength; but no manner of way do they comfort a Soul that is thus *Annihilated*. The Will endures alſo no leſs Torments. It is ſtated in a profound Vacuity and Emptineſs, and in ſuch a Commotion, that nothing pleaſes it any more; but with a Spiritual Averſion and Loathing,

it finds no Food that reliſhes with it. It imagines that it cannot love God any more, and that it is no longer able to *Will* the other Acts of Virtue; but is like one taken with the Palſie, not able to move, but tied up, hungry, and painfully languiſhing in the deepeſt and inexpreſſible Miſery. Dreadful are the Deſpairs, Fears, and other Afflictions and Conſternations that we feel in theſe Caſes. But for all this, there is no occaſion for Fear: For the Old Man is *deſtroyed* that the New may be *reſtored.*

How the Soul ſhould behave it ſelf in this Paſſive Reformation.

O Soul, who art thus Annihilated and deſtroyed, be not at all confounded: No, no; Reſolve to leave thy ſelf intirely at the Mercy of thy hidden and unſearchable God. Make no more Efforts to work after thy natural way, nor to do thy own Actions, ſeeing God, who undoes thee, will not have thee to be Active. Put thy ſelf in inward Silence, and give thy ſelf up for dead in thy God, ſo little known to thee in ſuch a ſtate, Suffering him to act in thee, who *Unmakes* thee to the end he may *Make* thee anew. Take heed to thy ſelf, that thou never give over Prayer and other Things which thy Vocation obliges thee to do. The Almighty will eſtabliſh New Virtues in thee; wonder not therefore if he deſtroyes the Old ones.

I know it is hard to endure this Annihilation, but how much more ſweet and pleaſant will it be to let the Chieſt Good act who doth every thing well. Dear Madam, there is much to be conſidered in theſe Papers; where there are more Sentences than Lines: Uſe them, and Farewel.

Jeſt, 30 *Mar.* 1674.

LETTER X.

Of Lively and Active Faith.

To a Perſon who was to enter upon a Spiritual Life.

1. What a Perſon muſt do who is not provided with a good Director. 2. The Neceſſity of Actual Faith to lead us to a Perfect Life. 3, 4. The Belief of the Preſence of God without Images. 5, 6, 7. Faith in the time of Confeſſion, Communion, and Vocal and Mental Prayer: 8. And other Performances.

1. YOU have reaſon to ſay, That you cannnot venture to make one Step in the way of the Spirit without a Guide; becauſe ſo many are the ſubtle Crafts of our envious Infernal Ene-

The Difficulty to walk in the way of the Spirit without a Guide.

my againſt thoſe Souls that aim at the height of Perfection, and ſo many the Deceits ariſing from our own Judgment, love of our Selves, and from our Rebellious Senſes, that a Perſon alone, without the extraordinary Grace of God, can never walk ſecure amidſt ſo many Snares; and ſtill the more dangerous, becauſe they are not perceptible. Men of great Knowledge and admirable Wit, upon their too great Confidence in themſelves, have thrown themſelves into inextricable Snares; and the wiſe Man, upon very good Grounds, teaches us, *To do nothing without Counſel; and by ſo doing we ſhould not repent it in the end.* But, dear Madam, you muſt not Deſpair on this account, nor be Diffident, nor muſt you break off aſpiring at the Degrees of Perfection, to which your Soul is called by the Dignity of its Religious State, and by the Invitations of the Spirit. Almighty God excells ſo much in Power, that as he does every thing by Means which he has created, ſo he can work without them when he pleaſes. If a Soul has the opportunity of a good Guide to conduct it to the high Hill of Perfection, but neglects to employ him, as if God himſelf would guide it, that Soul deceives it ſelf, and is widely miſtaken. And if it cannot poſſibly find

Eccl. 32.

What one ſhould do who wants a Guide.

find a Director for its Purpose; in this Case, let it take Courage, and at least, by the help of some good Book, and with holy and devout Prayer, with Humility, Sincerity and Uprightness of Heart, *Cast your Eyes upon God, and* (the Psalmist assures us) *you shall be lightened.* When the Creatures fail and come short, God is never wanting to Souls that heartily put their Confidence in him. To have a visible Guide, is without doubt the surest and shortest Way to come to God; but put the Case that a good Director cannot be found, let that loving and poor Soul be even confident, and have recourse to God, who *is loving and good to such as are of a clean heart*, as the great Psalmist sung. All our Perfection consists in a real, pure and upright Love of God; and in the abundance of Grace that conveys down to us the Love of God, and all sorts of Virtue. If you will therefore, dear Madam, with a confident and affectionate Humility, go to meet your most dear and lovely *Jesus*, be not in the least apprehensive that he will Reject you, or give you bad Reception; but rather believe, that he will conduct you to that Degree of Goodness, which will sute best with his Glory. Accustom your self in the continual Exercise of Three Things,

Psal. 34

Psal. 71. 1.

which will assuredly tend to your great Profit; namely, in *Mortification*, *Faith*, and *Love* or *Charity*. And since you are pleas'd that I should give you some Instructions, I am content the Discourse should turn on them.

Three Things necessary to Perfection.

The Exercise of Faith. Rom. 1. 17.

2. And to begin with *Faith*, (which is the Foundation of all Virtue, and that Meat which feeds the Soul, and *by which the Just live*, as St. *Paul* affirms) believe me, dear Madam, the good Use we make of this most eminent Virtue, is the Root of all Goodness. Because all the Inclinations, Desires, Affections, together with all the Operations of the Soul, take their Rise from the Notices and Apprehensions derived from the Understanding; it follows, That as he who governs his Understanding by the false Measures of the World, or by Sense, Interest and Self-Love, is liable to fall into Thousands of Faults and Inconveniencies; so he who illuminates and regulates his Understanding with the Rules and Light of Catholick Faith, by the help of Divine Grace, performs such Actions as are most Upright, Virtuous and Acceptable to God. Every well-affected Christian has true Faith, but every one has not a living Faith. Many have Lively Faith, but every one has not Actual Faith in all their Works.

A Lively and Actual Faith must be in every Action, as far as it is possible.

Works. O how much, how much worth is this first Advice I here offer you, to enliven and actuate your Faith in every Action, in each Discourse, Thought, Prayer, Confession, Communion, Obedience, and, to shut up all in one Word, in every Time and Place, as much as is possible in this miserable and blind Life.

A lively Belief of God's Presence.

3. The first Thing on which I would have you (as far as is possible) to fix your lively Faith, is the true, inward, close and intimate Presence of the most high God, Three and One, Invisible, Incorporeal and Incomphehensible; who is in you, and you are in him wheresoever you go, and in what Place soever you live. This Immense God fills every Place, (as he said in *Ieremiah*'s Prophecy, *I fill both heaven and Earth*) he penetrates and dives into every Creature, he is Present at all Times, and gives Being and Power to every Thing that partakes of Being or Power. Hence it comes, that I could not so much as Wink, nor Breathe, nor Form one Thought, if God were not most Inward and Present in me, and if he did not afford me Strength and Being. And the same is the Case with you and all Creatures that are in Heaven, on the Earth, and under the Earth, nay in the whole World. You must therefore accustom

Jer. 23.

your ſelf to walk by Faith in this Simple Apprehenſion and Pure Remembrance of the Preſence of God, and call to mind in all your external and Internal Operations, that you ſtand immers'd in the moſt illuſtrious Eſſence of God, and that he dwells in you, and is in the Center of your Spirit, and in all his Creatures.

The Preſence of God without Images.

4. I ſaid, Simple Apprehenſion and Pure Remembrance of God's Preſence, becauſe I would have you to frame no Figure or Shape of him, ſeeing God can admit of none; and *Faith* (that is, *the evidence of things not ſeen*) will believe without ſeeing. And as one born blind, if he were told by a Perſon worthy of Credit, That he is ſtanding in the Preſence of a great King; would, without Figuring to himſelf the Countenance of the Prince, barely upon the Belief of his Preſence, put himſelf in the Acts of Reverence and Modeſty due to ſuch a Preſence; ſo when you know by the undoubted Certainty of Catholick Faith, That you are not only in the Sight of God, but that God is alſo moſt Preſent within you; you ſhould endeavour to perform all your Actions, Words and Thoughts, with that Purity, Modeſty, Reverence, Virtue and Holineſs, that is agreable to the moſt ſublime Preſence of the Sovereign

Heb. 11. 1.

A Simile.

Lord

Lord of the whole World. And believe me, that this Advice alone, if it be applied to your Practice, and now and then repeated with more and more internal Pleasure and Diligence; will draw you to a great Purity of Spirit, will disengage you from the Creatures, and imprint in you an Aversion to them, and in the end bring you to a sincere and religious Perfection.

Lively Faith in making Confession of Sins.

5. In the same manner may you actuate or rather revive Actual Faith, when you Confess; dealing as candidly with your Confessor, as you may judge the two holy Sisters, *Mary* and *Martha*, did with *Jesus Christ*. You must deal with them in great Plainness, Simplicity and Submission, as also with every one of your Superiors, whosoever they be: Because you ought to see God in them by the Strength of Faith, who will have you to be Rul'd and Govern'd by Means of these Superiors: And because we are the holier, the more our Will is united with that of God, when you see the Will of God declared to you, either by the Means of your Superiors, Laws or Observances, you must endeavour still to renounce your own Will and Judgment, that you may not transgress that Obedience which you are bound to pay.

6. This

And in Communicating, and other holy Duties.

6. This quickening of Actual Faith is of greateſt Uſe at the Holy Communion, in Prayer, and in all Divine and Solemn Functions. And as concerning the moſt Holy Sacrament, think with what Heart full of Love, with what profound Humility ſhould one Communicate, if the Lord ſhould actually appear to him. And what would you do, if you ſhould behold the incomparable Beauty, of the Son of God made Man, unveil'd? What Amazement, what Humility, what Reverence and Love, would it create in you? Endeavour therefore to be poſſeſs'd with all theſe Affections, without ſeeing him; ſince you believe by the Dictates of lively Faith, that *Jeſus Chriſt* communicates himſelf to you under the Veil of theſe Elements.

In Vocal Prayer.

Whilſt you are rehearſing your Office, or other Vocal Devotions, (which I would not adviſe to be many, becauſe I would wiſh you to ſpend the moſt of your Time in internal Prayer) actuate and enliven your Faith, by thinking ſeriouſly that you are ſpeaking with God; that he is preſent with you, and hears you; and that you are praiſing and glorifying that immenſe Majeſty, who is Eternally and with greateſt Joy prais'd by the bleſs'd Spirits. And if your Mind

ſhould

ſhould wander through unvoluntary Diſtractions, be not troubled nor afflicted upon that Account, nor yet let them raiſe any Scruples in you, but as ſoon as you are aware of it, have Recourſe to this lively Faith, that you are ſpeaking with God who dwells in you; and ſet your ſelf a praiſing of him afreſh. And tho' you ſhould be diverted and diſtracted a Hundred or a Thouſand times, return ſtill with Peaceableneſs of Heart to the ſame Faith, and to the ſame Affection of glorifying your moſt intimate and well-beloved God, who heareth you.

And in Mental Prayer.

7. But I can never ſay enough of the neceſſity of Lively and Actual Faith in Mental Prayer. As oft as you proſtrate or recollect your ſelf in order to Mental Prayer, I adviſe you, to endeavour to put your ſelf immediately upon the Apprehenſion of the Real Preſence of your moſt high and only Good *GOD*, One and Three. Be you humbled, drown'd, plung'd, ſunk very low, and annihilated in the Preſence of your Sovereign Lord. Conſider and think, that you are a meer Nothing, and that you can do Nothing, you know Nothing, deſerve Nothing on your Part; and for this Reaſon, when you are at Prayer, and if you ſhould find Nothing, taſt Nothing, and nothing ſhould be

be granted you; be not impatient, be not afflicted, and think never the worse of your self for that; because you get no Wrong done you, if Nothing be given to that which is Nothing, and deserveth Nothing. Be satisfied in this, That you know your real Nothingness, and that you touch it as with your Hand; and that you can become as great; and possess as much, as the tender Mercy of God, which dwells in you, shall be pleas'd to bestow upon you. Rest contented to know by *Faith*, that you are most immediately present to God, that you are willing to love him dearly, depend upon him, please him and glorifie him, and that you study not your own Satisfaction.

And amidst Temptations and Distractions.

In such a Condition, be Constant, Patient, and Chearful in Spirit, and Calm in the very midst of Aridities, Temptations, vain Imaginations, and other Miseries that may befal you in time of Prayer. If you cannot meditate on the Point or Points which you had fix'd upon, be at least content to stand entirely immers'd in the Divinity of your God. Believe therefore from your Heart, That he is in you, and that you *live and move in him*; and so Adore him in the depth of Spirit, Love him, and be inwardly Quiet in this State of Faith, Adoration and Love; and I assure

Act. 17. 28.

assure you, your Time shall not be lost, tho' you were not able to Meditate, nor shed Tears, nor to fetch one Sigh or Groan. Beside, if Distraction and Disquiet of Mind, Temptations, and the importunate Thoughts of the Brain, the Remembrance of Persons or Business seem to hinder the good Work; fear not, I say, but endeavour still to retire to the inner Appartments of your Soul, and, by the strength of Faith, plunge your self in your beloved God. As oft as your Thoughts wander, retrieve them, and revive your Love; and your Prayer shall not be fruitless. Consider also (when you are tos'd hither and thither with Distractions) that God alone is present in your inward Part, and these Creatures that frequent your Thoughts are without you. For this Reason leave them where you find them, and give them no Entry or Room in your Thoughts; because they are without you, and know nothing of the Thoughts that run in your Head. But consider, by the Light of Faith, That God alone is truly within you, and sees your Thoughts and Affections; therefore think on him, love him, converse with him, and seek to lodge with all Quietness imaginable in his most tender and Affectionate Heart. I tell you this, lest if at any time you should be indispos'd

A liv ly Faith in other Humane Actions.

disposʼd for Meditation; because if you are able to Meditate and Exercise the Faculties of your Soul, in that Case you shall follow Meditation at least for some Months.

8. And lastly, In all your Affairs, walk by the Rules of Faith, and not of Sense, of the World, or of Humane Reason. Behold God hidden in each of his Creatures: Consider, that he governeth the World, and giveth Motion to all Things, wherefore take every thing that befals you (besides the Sins which you voluntarily commit) as from the Hand of God. Think more upon Eternity, than on this present Life. Labour more for Heaven, than for the Earth; and take more Pains for God, than for your self. Value more the Things that are not seen, than these which are seen; *because those things that are not seen are eternal*, and what are visible to our Mortal Eyes are Temporal, Frail, Miserable and most Vile, if compar'd with the Heavenly Greatness and Excellency whereunto we are called by our dearest Lord. Esteem God above all Things, and his Divine Commandments and Counsels, your Rules and Observances, the Sublime Religious State which you have embrac'd, your Superiours, the Sacraments, and the Sacred Ceremonies and Institu-

2 Cor. 4.

tions

tions of the Catholick Church. Esteem all Churchmen and Religious Men and Women, and, in short, every Thing that is exhibited to you by the holy Christian Faith taught by God himself, made-Man and Crucified for us, published by his holy Apostles, and confirm'd by a Number of Miracles, and with so much Blood of the Martyrs, so many Instructions of Doctors, and by so many Acts of Repentance and Holiness of Confessors and undefiled Virgins who are now the Immortal Spouses of the most amiable *Jesus Christ*.

Letter XI.

Of Mortification.

To the same Lady.

1. *The necessity of Mortification.* 2. *What it is, and how it is wrought.* 3. *The vicious Inclinations of the External Senses.* 4, 5. *The Mortification of the Touch, together with particular Rules to that Purpose.* 6. *The Mortification of the Tast.* 7. *Other Rules more distinct for it.* 8. *And for the Mortification of Smelling.*

DEar Madam, I confess that I have enlarg'd too much on the Declaration of the First Point of Faith: But because

cauſe I have no Time to ſpend on Replies, and ſeeing I am now out of my Native Country, and leſs imploy'd in Buſineſs, and at more freedom than I was in *Jeſi*; therefore I will write to you what may ſerve very many Months. And, in truth, if you will read theſe Sheets again, and weigh them ſeriouſly, you ſhall find there (Glory be to God for it) ſo much worthy your Conſideration and Practice, as to afford you more than ordinary Help. I now come to the ſecond Point.

The Exerciſe of Mortification is the Second Thing requir'd for Perfection.

It is upon the Foundation of Faith the Fabrick of Mortification muſt be rear'd, and we muſt never give over, until we come to finiſh perfectly the Roof of the Spiritual Houſe, which is *Love*. But becauſe *Love* is perfected in every Point in Paradiſe, from whence it may be infer'd, that when we have once got into Paradiſe we ſhall then only have no more need of Mortification to help us to perfect Charity, by deſtroying Self-Love, an Enemy to the Love of God. We are here below on Earth, and we are of the Earth. Behold how the Earth, by its Nature, continually ſends forth bad and uſeleſs Herbs, both amidſt the Corn and Grain, and alſo amidſt the Flowers of Gardens; and on this account it is neceſſary, that both the Husbandmen and the Gardiners hold often

ten the Pruning-Knife to cut down and extirpate these wild Herbs. Just so curſed Buds do continually ſpring from the Earth of our Body. Our Paſſions never die outright. Our vain Imaginations, and the perverſe Thoughts of our Brain, do very oft revive. Our own Judgment, and that curs'd Plague of Self-Love, always ſprout, and ſenſibly affect us. And this is not only moſt certainly verified in us, poor ſinful Wretches, but alſo in moſt holy Souls, which made the incomparable St. *Paul* break out, (in conſideration of the direful Rebellions which he felt, and we now feel) *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this death, and from the mortal law of this body?* Therefore the Mortification of our ſelves is neceſſary above what we can imagine or think upon.

The Neceſſity of Mortification.

Rom. 7. 24

2. Mortification is nothing beſides the killing of that which is alive, but that is not meet to live. The outward Senſes are alive in us, as alſo the internal; in us live the Paſſions, the raſh Judgment of the Underſtanding, and an aſſuming and licentious Liberty of Will lives in us. And all theſe live ſo much to our Loſs and Diſadvantage, that their baſe and deadly Life at length occaſions Eternal Death to many Souls. I do not there-

What it is.

How we must use Mortification.

fore underſtand by mortifying theſe, that Their natural Life muſt be taken away, or really kill'd. But as if I were to eat an Apple that is ſomewhat ſpoil'd or rotten, I remove the Rotten Part with my Knife, and reſerve the Good to be eaten, ſo we ought to take off from the Uſe of our Senſes, Paſſions and Faculties, that which is Evil and leave the Good. And a Pruner of Vines does not cut them at the Root, but lops off what is Uſeleſs and Superfluous; ſo we ought not to lay aſide the total Uſe of our Senſes and inward Faculties, but only by cutting off what is Hurtful, let us leave what is Reaſonable and Fruit-ful.

The Corruption of our outward Senſes.

3. Our external Senſes are five. The *Touch* deſires Things that are Smooth, and avoids thoſe that are Rough, Sharp and Painful. The *Taſt* will have Savours that are Luſcious and Palatable, and avoids Unſavourineſs, Sourneſs, and whatſoever is not pleaſant. The *Smell* covets ſweet Scents and Odours, and ſhuns what is ſtinking. The *Ear* is always fond of News, well-tun'd Voices, and harmonious Muſick; and avoids Diſcord and Noiſe, and is no Friend to Silence. And laſtly, The *Eye* courts fine Colours, fair Shews and Objects, that pleaſe it; and avoids Deformity and Loathſomneſs, Horrours

and

and Darkneſs. Theſe Senſes are evermore unſatiable, and will always have new Objects, thô this be againſt the Dictates of Reaſon; for which Cauſe, 'tis neceſſary to mortify them.

4. But to deſcend to Particulars. God's Servants have done wouderful Things to mortify the Senſe of *Touching*; which, being loweſt and moſt Corporeal, draws onr Soul to greater Baſeneſs, and pitiful Vileneſs. All the Lives of Saints, bleſs'd and holy Men, venerable for Virtue, upon Record, abound with marvellous Examples of their Auſterity and Penance, for mortifying of this Senſe that overſpreads the whole Body. The Diſciplines, Hair Cloths, the ſleeping on a Board or on the Earth, and bad Reſt, and other Severities againſt their Bodies, give us to underſtand, That this is not a Senſe with which we ſhould ſtrike a League. But it is true, on the other hand, that no univerſal or ſure Rule can be preſcrib'd, concerning the Way and Meaſure of mortifying it; ſeeing ſo various and great a Difference lies in the Age and Complexion: Some are Strong, ſome Weak; ſome are Rough, others Delicate; ſome Healthy, others Infirm and Sickly; ſo that a Mortification that is little to one, would be exceſſive and intolerable to another. I add, That

Mortification of the Touch.

The Diſcretion to be us'd in this.

generally ſpeaking Diſcretion is required, that the Vine may not be deſtroy'd from which the ſuperfluous Branches are only to be cut. What I have to ſay concerning the Penitence you have to do, I could wiſh you not to contrive it out of your own Head, but to take the Advice of your Superiours, who know your Conſtitution, and natural Temper and Spirit to a Nicety; therefore they are abler to give you a ſurer Advice than I can do, who am not fully acquainted with the Conditions of your Health, or Strength of Body.

Other Rules concerning the Touch.

5. But becauſe you are earneſt to perfect your Soul for the Glory of your Spouſe, *Jeſus*, I will lay down to you ſome other more diſtinct Rules concerning the Mortification of this Senſe, *that is more Dangerous than all the reſt*, and remoter from the Spirit. Wherefore to fall into Sins belonging to the *Touch* is to fall Headlong into a deep Pitt, from the lofty Top and Pinacle of an incorporeal Spirit. I ſpeak nothing to you of grievous and manifeſt Errors, that ſhould be ſo far from the Servants and Spouſes of Chriſt, that *they ſhould not* (according to the Apoſtle) *be nam'd amongſt us.* 1. You are by this time very ſenſible what Care you muſt take, and Diſtance you muſt keep, from every

S. Baſil, M. de Virgin.

Eph. 5.

every thing that can but in the leaſt defile the fair Lilly of Chaſtity, which you have conſecrated to the true God; wherefore ſuffer none other to approach you, but in Caſes of pure Neceſſity. 2. But you ſhould abſtain from every Contact of your Body which is not abſolutely neceſſary. And you ſhall do the ſame with your Siſters, even abſtaining from touching them by Careſſes under pretence of Love, which is ſeriouſly forbidden by *Bonaventure*. 3. Shun (as far as is poſſible) ſoft and fine Apparel and your Beds ſoftly made; remembering that Chriſt our Lord praiſing his Holy Harbinger and fore-runner *John*, ſaid, That he wore no ſoft Rayment, and that thoſe who live in Kings Courts are thus gorgeouſly Apparell'd. 4. If you at any time chance to enter any of the Siſters Chambers, Mortify your *Touch*, which will handle ſometimes one Thing and ſometimes another, that it finds there. And as to the not touching of another body's Hand, hear the words of St. *Gregory* of *Turon*, who ſpeaks thus in the Life of St. *Nicetius* Biſhop of *Lions*: *In the Eighth Year of my Age*, Nicetius *commanding me to be put into a little Bed, and taking me in his Arms with the Tenderneſs of Fatherly Love, he firſt wrapt himſelf up in his Cloak in ſuch a man-*

ner, and covered every Part of himself so, that his blest Members never touched me.

Mortification of the Touch, by enduring Cold and Heat.

It will also be of use for the Mortification of your *Touch*, to suffer at least a little of the Variety of Seasons, as the vehement Heat of Summer and sharp Cold of Winter. Take not so much Pains to wash your Hands often in fresh and Cold Water in Summer, as some do for Delight and the sensible pleasure of the *Touch*; as they hear the Water in the Winter when they are to wash. In which Season you may avoid the warming of your Bed with a Warming-pan, and shun the superfluous Delay in your Fire-room, and near the Chimney, where often-times many idle Stories are repeated, and those that are pernicious to the Spirit. Infirmities, Sorrows and other Pains, that may very often happen to you, may be very serviceable for the Mortification of this Sense: For this Cause you ought to recieve every Affliction from the Hand of God, not only with Patience, but also with Cheerfulness of Spirit, and cordial Gratitude to the Divine Love, who chastises you to make you Holy; *and the Evils which he sends are great Goods.*

S. Teres.

Mortification of the Taste.

6. As to what concerns the Sense of *Tasting*, it is also Dangerous to the last Degree, and Prejudicial to the Soul; where-

fore great Souls have no leſs labour'd to ſubdue the *Taſt* than the *Touch.* It is enough to read your own Journals, to ſee the frequent and almoſt continual Faſtings, and the unſavoury and courſe Fare, of many great Saints and their holy Diſciples and Followers. Some Servants of God have taken away the Savour of their Meat, either by putting in cold Water or Aſhes, or the Powder of Wormwood, or ſome other bitter Herbs, or even Gall it ſelf. But I judge it alſo proper in this Senſe, that you ſhould make uſe of the Rule, which I have before laid down to you, concerning the Senſe of *Touching*; becauſe many Examples of the Saints cannot be imitated by all. He muſt be endued with their Spirit, who would copie their Actions. I therefore alſo, in this Matter, refer you to the Advice which your Superiours can give you now and then, who ſeeing your Wants, can meaſure your Strength, and the Burden you are able to bear. Yet I think it proper for one who lives in a Community, to avoid regularly all ſorts of external Singularity. And I know, that ordinarily in Religious Houſes the Diet is but ſlender, nor yet coſtly or delicate; I ſhould be inclin'd to think, That if you (excepting in caſe of Sickneſs, or ſome real Exigencie;

or on the account of Obedience and Compliance) would content your self with the small and slender Cheer which your Table affords you, without adding any thing of your own, or accepting any thing from any other Body; I say, I am apt to think, you would sufficiently mortify the Sense of Tasting, and would satisfie inward Humility, which is not very fond of Virtues that make a great shew; but rather loveth what is secret. In like manner, if you would eat boil'd Meats, and so dress'd as they are set before you, without making any Addition, or without Complaining, Asking or Refusing any Thing, (unless in case of Necessity) I believe that in such a way by observing all the Fasts of the Church, and of your Rule, never opening your Mouth, about Eating, nor yet praising or discommending any kind of Food, nor willingly thinking on them; I say I believe you might come to an extraordinary Perfection, and Peace of Heart, and would never be burdensome to your Neighbours.

7. But because two eminent Spiritual Masters say, That we cannot aspire to the Victory of Spiritual Vices, without we first subdue the Vice of Gluttony; I judge it convenient to lay down to you other Rules that are more distinct and clear.

We

We may Sin five manner of Ways in the Extravagancy and Irregularity of this Senſe. 1. Becauſe it deſires better and more delicate Meat, than what is requiſite for our neceſſity or ſtation. 2. Or becauſe we too curiouſly ſeek after, and contrive Methods of Cooking and Sauces, and Preparations that are Extravagant, and look like Gluttony. 3. Becauſe we will eat or drink in Quantity above our ordinary Need. 4. Or becauſe we needleſly anticipate the fit Hour for Eating. Or laſtly, becauſe we eat haſtily and greedily. Much could be ſaid upon theſe Ways of Viciouſneſs; but it would exceed the Bounds of a Letter. Conſider the ſaid Rules one by one, and apply them to particular Caſes; and I hope the Lord will give you Light, to know the many Faults that are committed by this Senſe. But for your greater Clearneſs, weigh the Rules that an eminent Perſon lays down for this Mortification.

Gluttony is committed five Ways, and what theſe are.

1. Endeavour to pray before Meat, by directing that Action to the pure End of God's Glory, and by praying the Lord, to help you, not to offend him in time of Eating. 2. When you are well never admit of choice Diſhes, but be content with what is common. At Table I neither commend the giving or receiving of Meats as a preſent. 3. Leave (if you can) a little

Ja. Alu. Ope. Spi. *To.* 2. *l.* 2. *Par.* 2 *c.* 5.

Rules to mortify the Taſt.

little Portion of the Meat which is allowed you, what ſeems meeteſt to you for the Love to Jeſus Chriſt his Gall and Vinegar. 4. And eat not (when you can without any Mark of Singularity) of certain Meats that are very Delicious, and very Extraordinary; or at leaſt taſte but little of them, and endeavour to withdraw your mind from that Taſt, leſt your Spirit be enſnared by it. Endeavour never to ſatisfy your ſelf wholly with common Meats; and avoid all ſort of Fulneſs of Stomach. Believe me, moderate and diſcreet Abſtinence is good, both for Health and Holineſs. 5. In time of eating, ſink not your noble Spirit in that mean Action; but either be attentive to the Reading, if there be any; or think on ſome Heavenly Thing that can feed your Soul. 6. Be by no means a lover of Wine; for St. *Jerom*, and St. *Baſil* would have Virgins drink none of it; and the firſt ſaid *That it was better the Stomach ſhould be ſick than the Mind.* And it is written in the Holy Scripture, That *Solomon reſolved to withdraw his Fleſh from Wine, that he might apply his heart to Wiſdom.* Be not therefore a Lover of it, and eſpecially while you are young: Except you allay and qualify its Strength with Water; and ſhun drinking unleſs at Supper and Dinner,

Eccl. 2. 3.

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if it be not ordered by Neceſſity or Obedience. My Deſign is to make you uſe theſe Rules of *Taſt*, as well as thoſe of *Touching*, with due Prudence, and Diſcretion, becauſe our Lord God loves that you ſhould mortify the Taſt, yet not ſo as to hurt Nature. We muſt indeed offer our Body as a Sacrifice to God; but this *Service muſt be reaſonable*, as the great Apoſtle will have it. Rom. 12.

8. As to the Senſe of *Smelling*, I cannot underſtand, how a Soul that aims at the Imitation of *Jeſus Chriſt*, can (if in Health) have any needfull occaſion for Scents. They ſeem to me to be Things rather for effeminate Souls, than for the gallant Soldiers of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who love the Croſs. *Breath thou no other Odour* (ſaid St. *John Chryſoſtom*) *but Virtue. There is nothing more unclean than a Soul, when the Body has ſuch a fragrant Smell. The Scent of the Body and Garments, argue a ſtinking and unclean Soul to be lodg'd within.* I therefore (to deal ſincerely with you) would have you diſcharge and exclude all Scents and Odours; nor would I have you, under the very Pretence of Devotion, to uſe Reliquiaries, or Purſes for Reliques with Musk, or any other Odoriferous Matter. It is alſo ſometimes a very good thing to endure bad Smells patiently, that we may Hom. 4. De Lazar. To. 2.

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get above Vice, and love God, as we read many Saints to have done: And in particular, St. *Arſenius*, and St. *Sincletica*; and in our Times St. *Francis Borgia*, and ſome others. You may more eſpecially, by ſerving the Sick, have occaſion to win bright Crowns of Victory over this Senſe.

Letter XII.

To the ſame ——

1. *Rules for the mortifying of our Hearing.* 2. *The Neceſſity of mortifying the Eyes:* 3. *And Rules for that purpoſe.* 4. *How we may come to be perfect in theſe Rules.* 5. *Rules for the Mortification and good Government of the Tongue.* 6. *How we ought to Speak.* 7. *The Greatneſs and Excellencie of Chriſtian Hope, together with the Grounds of it.*

The Mortification of Hearing. Its Uſefulneſs and Difficulty.

1. I Continue to purſue my laſt, which was ſent you imperfect; it remains to ſpeak of the Mortification of the Two moſt noble Senſes, *Hearing* and *Seeing*, which is no leſs uſeful, and perhaps more difficult than thoſe I have already mention'd: Nor can we fear, that this Mortification may wrong our Health, as it ſometimes happens in

in the former. And Becauſe created things that affect our Ears and Eyes, make a ſtrong Impreſſion on our Fancies; and therefore your Care and Watchfulneſs, muſt not be mean or indifferent in the Mangaement of theſe two Senſes; the Practice and Perſeverance in it will prove more difficult than what is commonly imagin'd: But the high and glorious Reward, which is gain'd by ſo doing, together with the great Love of God, facilitates the Labours and Pains taken by a Soul truly inamour'd with its Lord. Be ſure therefore to practiſe it.

Several Practical Rules for the Management of this Senſe.

2. Be therefore wary and vigilant in keeping your Ears, and preſerving them far from all Diſcourſes, Songs, or Readings, that are Impure or Prophane, or bear the leaſt Shadow of Undecency to the undefil'd Ears of a Spouſe of the Spotleſs *Jeſus*. Let not the Charms and Artifice of Muſical Notes, Numbers, or any ſweet and exquiſite Voice impoſe ſo upon you, as to make you hear (or much leſs to ſing) Songs that ſavour of the World, and vain Amours. Whoever ſingeth or talketh, rehearſeth or ſo much as mentioneth ſuch Things, let him be deteſted, abominated, and avoided by you, as a hiſſing and and poiſonous Dragon. A Soul that is truly Heavenly

Heavenly cannot endure to hear foul and earthly Language. 2. Avoid the hearing of Jeſts, Drolls, ridiculous Diſcourſes, and uſeleſs Prating, which provoke you to fooliſh Laughter, and ſwell your Heart with Vanity and Folly, and which fill your Head with importunate Fancies and Imaginations, which indiſcretely break in upon you in Prayer. 3. Make it not your Buſineſs to hearken to Worldly News, and to the Stories and Reports of Worldly Things, which do not concern your Station: And fly carefully from giving Ear to Detractions (tho' never ſo light or ſmall) againſt Neighbours; and from Complaints and Murmurings, wherewith ſome Tongues full of Self-Love and Paſſion whiſper againſt their very Superiors. Nor ought your Vigilance to be leſs, to defend your ſelf, and fly from Diſcourſes that Praiſe or Applaud you, and which are ſecret Bellows to puff you up with Vain-Glory, Self-Conceit, and Self-Love, 5. When you ſee one Neighbour ſpeaking with another in Secret, never liſten, nor be curious to hear what paſſes betwixt them, nor intrude into their Company to interrupt them, or to ask them about Matters with which you have nothing to do. And, in ſhort, deſire not to hear any thing willingly, but

What ought to be heard.

but what you are concerned to hear, or on the account of Neceſſity, Profit, Obedience, or ſome Act of Charity towards your Neighbours. 7. And becauſe (as the Apoſtle ſays) *Faith comes by hearing*, hearken with the utmoſt Attention to any Perſon who ſpeaks of God, and of the Doctrines of Faith; of Victory over Vice, and of the Conqueſt and Purchaſe of Virtue; of Things Eternal, and of our moſt holy Redeemer *Jeſus*, who is the Example of all Holineſs; and in fine, of Charity, a Virtue which is the Treaſury of all good Things. Rom. 10.

3. That you may henceforth know the indiſpenſible Neceſſity you lie under, to keep your Eyes under a diligent and ſtrict Guard; you have no more to do, but to conſider the Place where you are ſettled. You are ſhut up in a Monaſtery, that divides and ſeparates you from the reſt of the World, and deprives you of ſeeing it any more; to ſhew and perſwade you how needful it is for you not to ſee that which ſavours of the World, or may poiſon your Spirit. 'Tis a Point worthy of the deepeſt Reflection, to conſider that you have already declared your ſelf, by ſolemn Vows and Promiſes, to be the Spouſe of the Exalted Son of God made Man for you, and that ſeeing he is your only *Mortification of the Eyes.*

only Husband, he must in consequence be the only Object of your inamour'd Heart. You ought therefore to apply your self with special and extraordinary Watchfulness, to avoid all Danger of admitting into your Heart any created Object, that appears lovely, and may tear from your Bosom but the least Portion of that Love, which you should entirely resign and deliver up to *Jesus Christ*, who will have it intire, pure, and without reserve; and O how well does he deserve it! O how true is that which the Prophet *Jeremiah* says, that *Death comes up into our house by the windows!* How many Enemies of the Soul enter at the Windows of our Eyes; either to kill it, by drawing it into grievous Sins; or to wound and bruise it, by making it deviate into Miscarriages and lighter Faults; or, at least, by troubling and confusing the Spirit, the inward Purity, Recollection and firm Attention to God, with a number of Images of various Objects that enter by the Eyes. Which was the Reason, why so many Servants of God in the more Ancient and Primitive Church (and even in later Ages, since *the hand of God is not shorten'd*) retir'd to Desart Places, and shut themselves up in solitary Cells, and shun'd to look upon the World and its vain Pomps; because

Jer. 9. 21.

Is. 59.

becauſe they would have no Lodger in the inner Apartments of their Heart, but God. But becauſe ſo many Creatures inſinuate themſelves into our internal Faculties by the open Windows of the Eyes, thoſe who aim ſimply at God, do chiefly ſtudy to mortify them. This Neceſſity of Watchfulneſs being therefore made clear to you, I ſhall mention ſome Rules concerning it, and ſtrive you to profit by them, and carefully to put them into Practice.

4. You ſhould therefore, above all other Things, avoid the ſeeing of Men, and more eſpecially of brisk young Men. With what Glory and ſweet Joy, think you, might St. *Clara* of *Montefalco* breath out her ſpotleſs Soul, when ſhe mentioned, (and told her Nuns for their Inſtruction) that ſhe could ſay with a ſafe Conſcience, that ſhe never look'd a Man in the Face for the whole courſe of her Life? As if a moſt faithful and chaſt Wife, whoſe Husband were gone into ſome far Country, ſhould not mind to look upon other Men; ſo you, who have your Spouſe *Jeſus (who is fairer than all the children of men)* in Heaven, muſt endeavour to reſtrain and bridle the Extravagance of your Eyes from looking on other Men; by conſtantly repreſenting to them, That

Several Practical Rules for the Government of the Eyes.

Pſal. 45. 3.

if they be patient under Mortification here in this lower World, they ſhall come in the end to behold and contemplate their moſt beautiful Saviour to all Eternity in his Heavenly Glory.

2. Great will the Reward of your Soul alſo be, if you mortify your Sight, by removing your Eyes from admiring and gazing upon Ladies, who come to your Church with their gaudy and pompous Apparel; or young Brides with new Faſhions of Clothes, the Trophies of Humane Vanity. Spurning Senſe, which is ſtill fond of Liberty, will judge theſe Things that I am writing to be inſupportable Subtilties, and a Number of Niceties; but in truth they are the Doctrines of theſe Saints, who to day enjoy the Reward of them in Heaven. O if we would ſeriouſly conſider, how ſhort and inconſiderable a Thing is the Pleaſure of a curious Look; and on the contrary, how much heavenly and endleſs Glory the Soul may gain, by the very leaſt Mortification that it undergoes for the Love of God; or if we thought on this, how much more diligent would we be to watch over our ſelves, and perſevere in keeping our Senſes under good Diſcipline and Reſtriction! 3. I have no mind here to give you a Caution againſt ſeeing of

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Comedies, Balls and other Plays, which you ſhall never have occaſion to ſee in that Sacred Place whither you have retired. 4. I nevertheleſs adviſe you to turn your Back upon every Book that is not Sacred, or has no relation to Virtue. Shun the reading any vain or frolick Writings, or what is leſs than Pure, or ſerves only to foſter Curioſity, or barely contains Worldly Matters, as Romances, Comedies, Prophane Hiſtories, or Poetry that is not Sacred and Devout. 5. And for your greater Perfection, be not fond of gazing on Gold or Silver, made only for the Oſtentation of Humane Grandure; nor Embroidery, (when there is no Neceſſity for it) nor uſeleſs Pictures; nor other Objects that puff up the Soul with Vanity, but do not Edify it. 6. But if at any time you enter into any of your Siſters Chambers, mortify your ſelf, by not looking on any thing there. 7. Be not fickle and unconſtant in looking about you upon every Noiſe or Novelty, nor yet to obſerve what others do in the Choir, or elſewhere. 8. And to put an end to this Matter, be mindful, That your Eyes were given you by God, that you might employ them for his Glory, your own Neceſſity, and the Advantage both of your Soul and Body; or indeed for Charity

For what End God gave the Senſe of Seeing.

toward your Neighbours, or the Exercise of some Obedience, or for any other Virtues whatsoever.

How to attain to the perfect Mortification of the Senses.

5. I must then Advertise you, That we arrive not in the space of one Week to the Perfection of all those Rules concerning the Senses, but leasurely by a continued and discreet Practice, and by putting our Confidence in God; for which Cause you must never be discouraged, tho' sometimes, or even often, you find your self to have omitted them, or to have transgressed, sometimes one, and sometimes another of them. But be rather bold in God; and so soon as you have spied your Error, amend it by a speedy Repentance; beg of God Pardon for it from your Heart; and resume your Confidence, and resolve to begin afresh. This Rule may be of use to you in any other Fall, or Escape.

Rules for the Mortification of the Tongue.

6. We will add to the Mortification of the outward Senses, a few Rules concerning the Use of your Tongue; and indeed this a Matter is little spoken of, and I shall likewise be as short and substantial as is possible. 1. I will not here make it my Business to inculcate the avoiding every grievous Sin of the Tongue; because I judge, that a true and real Spouse of *Jesus Christ* (such as I take you to be)

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is resolved to shun every Detraction, or Discourse concerning the Defects of her Neighbour, whether they be great or small. 2. Never utter one Word, tho' by way of Jesting, to deride and expose the very meanest Defect of another Body; and still mind this Sentence of a Man that was no less Holy than Learned, who remark'd two sorts of Languages, one Heavenly, and another Earthly: *The Earthly* (said he) *is to speak well of themselves, ill of others, and never of God. The Heavenly Language is to speak ill of themselves, well of others, and continually of God, or for God.* Examine your self seriously by this Rule. Shun not only hurtful Lies, but also those that are Jocose and Vain; and even officious ones, that may afford some apparent Advantage. 'Tis an unquestionable Rule of the Holy Ghost that is taught by St. *Paul*, *We must not do evil that good may come*; a Lie is continually Evil, and therefore must be still avoided: *Use not to make any manner of lie*, said the Preacher in general. Let a House, a City, nay a World fall before you tell a considerate Lie, and offend the great God of Truth, tho' even with this small Sin, which is a greater Evil than the Ruine of the whole World. Avoid also to speak doubly, or equivocally, or artificially, and what may

F. Lud. del Pont.

Against Lying.

Rom. 3. 8.

Eccl. 7. 13.

deceive your Neighbours; and love ſimple and downright Truth. 5. Shun Strife, Contention, and brawling Words; and rather ordinarily chuſe to yield and give way, than either to Sin your ſelf, or give occaſion to another to kindle into a Paſſion. 6. Shun carefully to ſpeak to your own, or the Praiſe of what belongs to you. 7. If you know any Secret, do not diſcover it without ſome weighty Reaſon, and (when you can do it) without firſt conſulting about it. 8. Endeavour to abſtain from Buffoonries and ridiculous Words, misbecoming the Gravity of your Religious and Virginal Station in which God hath placed you. 9. Let vain and idle People entertain themſelves with vain and frivolous Words, of which, our Saviour has plainly told us in his Goſpel, *we muſt give an account in the fearful day of Judgment*: But let your Converſation be concerning Things that are convenient for you.

Conſiderations before Speaking.

7. Before you ſpeak, 1. Conſider prudently with a ſhort internal Reflection, if it be proper to ſpeak at ſuch a Time, in ſuch a Place, with ſuch a Perſon, or on ſuch a Subject. Let not ſo many Rules ſcare you, ſeeing all Diligence is little enough, and all Pains taken is well beſtow'd, to pleaſe our moſt amiable God,

and

and, to arrive at Christian Perfection; 2. Keep Silence in Places and Times appointed for that purpose. 3. When you have occasion to be silent, beware of a certain melancholick Silence, or what savours of Anger, Envy, Sourness and uneasiness, that sometimes give Scandal to the Beholders. 4. Endeavour also to be silent in Mind, when your Tongue is so. 5. But if you ought to speak in any case, either for Charity's sake, or your own Good, or that of your Neighbour, or on the score of Obedience; in such a case be not imposed upon by the desire of Silence, which would be indiscreet, prejudicial, unseasonable, or even obstinate. 6. When you converse with your Neighbours, (and especially if they are your Superiours) let your Discourse be reverent, modest, and edifying to the Hearers. 7. Above all Things, when you speak of God, and Divine Matters, do it in such a respectful and pure manner, as is due to the great Lord of the whole World, and to the Dignity of his most holy Mysteries. 8. And finally, because the Tongue is so apt to trip, never speak much when little may do the business.

When we should speak, and with what Designs.

How we should speak.

8. Behold you have here in this Letter a fair Field for Study and Contemplation, and yet a far larger for Exercise and

Practice. Be very bold and confident in these most effectual Helps, which God is pleased to give to those Souls who put their Trust in him, and who apply themselves with Purity of Heart, and Sincerity of Intention to the attainment of Virtue and Christian Perfection, for the greater Glory and Satisfaction of God. Hope abundantly in the merciful *Jesus*, and expect great Helps and Assistances from his Mercy: And I assure you, that you shall never hope so much, but your Confidence shall be very small and inconsiderable, if compared with the immense and diffusive Charity, Clemency, Mercy and Bounty of God. Hope and be stedfast, and rely on the strong Support of God's Fatherly Bounty, and the Merits of your dear Saviour and Spouse *Jesus*. And strive to put this that I have written to you in Practice. I will send you the rest of this profitable Treatise when you please; and the Things I am to demonstrate to you shall be more internal, and no less fruitful. Hope and be stedfast, and labour until you have received Light; and may your Light be *Jesus Christ*.

How great Christian Hope ought to be.

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Letter XIII.

To the same ——

1. *Of Internal Mortification.* 2. *Common Sense.* 3. *And its Defects.* 4. *Of the Fancy.* 5. *How the Devil acts on it.*

I Have given you abundance of Rules concerning the Mortification of the outward Senses and Tongue: But because these Members and outward Senses do actually depend upon the inward Faculties, and especially upon the Command of the Will; hence it comes, that the chief Study of a Christian consists in the perfect Reformation of the internal Faculties, in order to arrive at Uprightness of the Will, and free Choice. I do here explain my self once for all, and would wish, that as many as shall see my Writings, wherein I treat of living Virtuously, and overcoming Vice, were advertis'd, That I am very well satisfied, and confess, that a reasonable Creature without the Grace of God cannot perform any thing that is really Good, Virtuous, or Meritorious, in order to Life Eternal. Wherefore

Outward Mortification depends on that within.

fore when ever I either ſpeak here, or in any other Place, of overcoming our ſelves, of correcting our Faculties, my Meaning is, when this is grounded on the Aſſiſtance and Aid of the Heavenly Grace, which we ought to expect from our moſt high God, through the Merits of our deareſt Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*. This being preſuppoſed, I now proceed briefly to deſcribe our inward Powers and Faculties, as well thoſe that are called Internal Senſes, as what we term Faculties purely Spiritual, namely, the Underſtanding and the Will. But I have a mind to handle theſe Things, not as a Maſter, forſooth, that would diſcipline and train you up in Philoſophy, but as a Director of your Soul; to the end, that you, knowing what Things are in you, may more eaſily regulate and reduce them to their due Integrity.

What Common Senſe is, and its Functions.

2. Corporeal Things that enter at any one of the Five External Senſes, have one Place in the fore part of our Brain above the Forehead, where they meet, and this is called *Common Senſe*. Each External Senſe performs Operations proportionable to it ſelf; but does not underſtand its own Operations, nor yet thoſe of other Senſes. For tho' your Eye ſees this Paper, yet it does not ſee that it ſees, nor can it form

form a reflex Thought on its act of Seeing. Your Hand touches the Paper, but the Hand knows not what to make of the Eye's seeing; no more does the Eye feel and perceive what the Hand's touching means. All the Operations of the Five Senses do center and unite (as I have said) in the *Common Sense*; and it is this that understands the Actions of those, together with their Differences. You therefore see with your Eye, and touch with your Hand, and know by your *Common Sense* that you See and Touch; and likewise know the difference between *Seeing* and *Touching*. But to leave all Niceties, let us come to the Profit and Advantage of the Soul, which is my only Purpose and Concern.

The Damage we sustain'd by Original Sin, and how God would have us to repair it.

'Tis certain, that this fine reasonable Compound, Man, sustain'd great Damage by the Sin of his first Parents; and it requires no small Pains to remedy the Evils that proceed from it; nor can it ever be sufficiently done without Grace. 'Tis also certain, that seeing God gave us a Soul endued with Understanding and Reason, and enrich'd with Free-Will; and he being ready on his part to give us Grace, he would consequently have us not to suffer our selves to be oppressed by the Rebellions and Battels of our Senses and Passions, nor by the Disorders of Lust, which

which proceed from Original Sin; but that we, by making uſe of the Light of Faith, of Divine Helps, of the Holy Sacraments and other fit Supplies, and of the Light of Reaſon and Free-Will, may labour to ſubdue our Vices, and walk Virtuouſly, whereby we may come to be eternally happy with his Divine Majeſty. All this is the ſure Will of God: Let us therefore ſee what Evils ſeize our Faculties from Original Sin, and we ſhall lay down Remedies againſt them. Therefore to follow the Thread of my Diſcourſe, I return to the *Common Senſe*. This Senſe is only in Action, when any of the outward Senſes actually Operate; wherefore when you actually are looking on this Paper, the Common Senſe is alſo actuated and employed, and knows, that the Eye beholdeth this viſible Object. But as ſoon as you leave off to See, and ſuppoſe you did not Touch, Taſte, nor Smell nor Hear any thing; then the Common Senſe remains an empty and unactive Faculty. But ſo it is, that it deſires to be in Action, without regarding if the Action be reaſonable or not. And from this its brutiſh Appetite, proceeds that inconſiderate Haſte and Precipitancy, which it forces upon the external Senſes, and ſets them on working of their Senſitive Acts:

The Nature of Common Senſe.

Its Viciouſneſs and Natural Imperfection.

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Suppoſe it were the *Taſte*, that it puſh'd forward to eat greedily, and drown it ſelf in delicious Savours; or if a Man ſhould loſe his Temper, and turn uneaſie becauſe he is late in Dining or Supping: The ſame may be ſaid of the other Senſes. And whoever will take the Pains to reflect upon himſelf, and examine his own Motions, will eaſily feel, both in his external Senſe, and internal Apprehenſion, the Appetites of ſeeing ſome beautiful, new or unuſual Object; or of hearing ſome Diſcourſe, Sound or Muſick, or of Smelling, and ſuch-like, which I ſtudiouſly paſs by. This plunging of our ſelves after ſuch a manner in Corporeal and Senſitive Objects, and ſometimes this Rage and Agony for ſome ſenſual Pleaſure and Delight; this Precipitancy which Man feels to overtake him, and this Impatience when ſtopt or diſappointed, proceeds very oft from the Common Senſe; yet we never think upon it, nor make it our buſineſs to mortify it. And the Devil, on the other hand, ceaſes not to puſh us on alſo, and to ſharpen the Hunger of this Senſe.

A Remedy for the Defects of Common Senſe.

3. That I may remedy this Evil, (from which, as from a concealed Root, ſpring a vaſt number of Sins) I could draw you no better Rule, than ſome marvellous Sentences

tences of that holy Man, *Johannes a Cruce*, whom I cannot mention without an in-
Senten. n. 39. ward Reſpect. *Happy is the Man that turns his Back upon his own Pleaſures and Inclinations*, (behold the Appetites and Motions of Senſe) *and ſo regards the Things that he is to ſet about, as not to do them unleſs he be moved thereto by Reaſon and Juſtice.* And he had before ſaid, *Strike this League with Reaſon, to do only what it dictates to you in the way of God.* This is therefore a Remedy againſt the Diſorders of Common Senſe; to reſiſt the Impetuouſneſs and furious Violence wherewith it drives you on, and to reduce your Soul to the pure Light of Reaſon, without being diſtracted or divided by Senſe, or outward Objects, but ſettled in Righteouſneſs, and the ſtreight Path of Virtue and of God. Be therefore wary for the future, and endeavour by all means to reſiſt the forward and unreaſonable Appetites of your Senſes.

4. But let us come to the other inward Senſe called *Fancy*. The Objects that paſs through any External Senſe, and meet in the *Common Senſe*, make no ſtay in it, when the Action of the External Senſe is once over. So that when you take your Eye off this Paper, as not to behold it, then no *Idea* or Image of it abides in the

Common

Common Senſe. For this Cauſe, our Lord God has given Man a Fancy to retain and preſerve in it the Images and Likeneſſes of Things which we *See*, *Hear*, *Taſte*, or which ſtrike any other Senſe. Beſides, this Faculty in Man has Power to compound or put together, and to divide the Fantaſms and Likeneſſes, which it retains; ſo if I have the Image of my Friend in my Fancy, I may figure and repreſent him to my ſelf, with his Head divided from his Body. And becauſe I have alſo the *Idea* of an Eagle's Feathers, I can conceive my Friend entire, and alſo flying with the Wings of an Eagle. But, O my God, what Tongue is able to expreſs how many Miſchiefs overtake us by this Senſe? My Mind is ſo much ſet on Brevity, that I am forced to cut ſhort, paſs over many Things, and touch on a few only; but much may be drawn from theſe few General Hints. How much is this Faculty weaken'd and impair'd by the Fall of *Adam*; and how great a Rebel is it become to Reaſon! Conſider, I beſeech you, how unconſtant it is, and eſpecially when we endeavour to recollect our ſelves in Prayer. We no ſooner enter into our ſelves, to dwell in our Interiour, and in God, than the Fancy ſtands up with an Army of Imaginations againſt us,

Of the Fancy, and its Functions.

The Faults of this Faculty.

us, and ſometimes faces about to this, ſometimes to that Object, without Order or Rule. Beſides, there are ſeveral Differences of this inward Senſe: For ſome have a Fancy ſo tenacious and ſtrong, that they will never quit that Thing which they have once got a Notion of by it; and that ſo lively, that they frame to themſelves Images and *Idea's* of Things more diſtinctly, than if they ſaw them with their very Eyes, which renders them liable to ſeveral Illuſions. Such Perſons commonly form Opinions, and they ſeem to them to be ſo very true, and imagine them ſo lively, that they very often come to look upon them as ſeen Truths, and vent them for ſuch to others. Theſe that are of a melancholick Complexion, have much to do to fight againſt this Faculty. Some have it ſo light, ſo delicate and voluble, that they cannot fix on any one Thought. And becauſe the Paſſions of the Mind have a great Affinity with the inward Senſes; hence it is, that ſuch are liable to a great Variety and Inſtability of fleeting Paſſions; and that Steadineſs is rarely found in them.

How the Devil works upon this Faculty.

5. But becauſe (as you know) the Devil, being a Spirit, can dive into, and forcibly work upon all the Faculties of the Body, I will here take occaſion to mention the

the manifold Snares that the Devil plants in this Faculty, and the Paſſions he raiſes by the Means of it. I take no notice of the ugly Dreams, whereof he is very often the Author. But who can reckon up the number of Images and Repreſentations provoking us to Sin, ſtir'd up in our Fancy by his Inſtigation? And becauſe a Spirit is not perceptible to us, nor yet can it be felt or evidently known by us in this Life; hence it is, we are obnoxious to ſo many Diſorders of Imagination, and cannot fathom who it is that ſets them on going, and we frequently think our ſelves the Cauſe that produces them; which occaſions Sorrow and Anguiſh of Spirit, and Dejection of Mind, and a kind of falſe Humility, which defeats our Courage and Confidence that I hold to be ſo neceſſary for aſpiring and aſcending unto the Mount and Pinacle of Perfection. Moreover, the Devil, by framing Images in the *Fancy* by way of ſupernatural Viſions, either of Angels, Saints, or of Chriſt himſelf, has, alas! more than a Thouſand times, ſeduc'd many Souls who were not well grounded on Faith, nor wean'd and alienated from the falſe Spiritual Love of themſelves. And in this faſhion has he done his utmoſt Endeavour to breed a wrong Notion and

Conceit in many of them, that a Contemplative Life is dangerous; and that those who follow it, are not only liable to mistake, but are even for the most part actually mistaken. And this is the Reason why many Confessors make a strange Noise about it, and reckon a Soul fantastick and proud that will entertain any thing like Contemplation. And others there are, whose Hair stand on end at the very Name of Vision; and condemn it unmercifully, without giving it a fair Hearing. It is good *not to believe every Spirit*, (as St. *John* the Apostle said) *but to try the Spirits whether they are of God*; as the Saint subjoins. Unhappy should St. *Teresa*, *Catherine*, *Gertrude* and *Rosa*, have been, if they had only fallen into such Confessors Hands as these are. But 'tis needful to inform such, That the Church of God shall never want great Souls, endued with Contemplation and many supernatural Gifts.

Jo. 1. 4.

LETTER XIV.

To the same ——

1. Some Defects of the Fancy in Meditation. 2. The Images of the Fancy, what they are, and of how many kinds. 3. Grievous Temptations rais'd by the Devil in this Sense. 4. Of indifferent Images in the Fancy. 5. Of good Idea's, and how to use them. 6. Rules for the Mortification and good Use of the Fancy.

1. THE Fancy may be employ'd on Meditation; but this requires Discretion, and especially in the Case of easy and credulous Women, who are strong in framing Imaginations. The vehement and long Application of this Faculty weakens it considerably, and is able to waste it, seeing it is Corporeal, and suffers in its Operations. Hence it is, that some imprudent Persons, who will advance to Perfection in Prayer by dint of Imagination, and of a strong Brain, bring Diseases upon themselves, and render themselves unable to pray, and sometimes run into Frenzy; not, forsooth, because Prayer is defective on its part, as some

Libertines affirm) but for want of Discretion in him, who prayeth, by abusing and committing Violence on his Fancy, in that he will fix it stedfastly on one Object, and would have it to hold out in spite of its natural Instability.

What the Idea's are which we have in our Fancy.

2. But that I may not dwell too long on this, I shall come to the Remedies of the Evils and Mischiefs that I have already mentioned; but I must first shew you what Good or Evil our Fancy is capable of. When I speak of *Fantasms*, I mean those Resemblances and Likenesses of Corporeal and Particular Things, which passing through some External Sense, come to the Fancy and stop there; and the Person or the Devil acting the Part of a Tempter, can revive and rub them up; so you can represent to your self your Superior, or the Sound of your Bells, or any thing else variously conceived. There may be therefore three kinds of Images in our Fancy; some are evidently Ill, others Indifferent, and others Good. All those are Ill, which can draw us into Sin; as the *Idea's* that induce us to Uncleanness, or Hatred and Wrath, (as if I should represent to my self one who had wrong'd me, and should resolve or think on sharp Words or Revenge) or, in short, what may draw us over into any Failing whatsoever,

Three kinds of Images in this Sense.

ſoever, as Meats do to Gluttony, &c. Others are indifferent, as the Idea's of Palaces, Gardens, Animals, Men, and other Corporeal Things, Idea's of the third kind are Sacred, as thoſe of Chriſt and of Holy Men. As to the firſt, it is evident, that they ought to be avoided without any Delay. And here I muſt inform you, That tho' we be not Maſters of our Fancy as we are of our outward Members, ſo as to be able to prevent the Importunity of its officious Fantaſms; we have nevertheleſs the Liberty and Power to withdraw our Notice and voluntary Regard, and reject what the Fancy repreſents to us. And here lies our Obligation. Let this therefore be your General Rule; *Never ſtop deliberately to feed your Mind with ſinful Idea's, tho' they ſhould lead you only to ſmall Offences*; as to repreſent a comical and ridiculous Action, or ſcurrilous Word, or to be moved with Laughter to no purpoſe.

Grievous Temptations excited by the Devil in the Fancy.

3. 'Tis therefore fit to warn you, That ſeeing the Devil (as was juſt now ſaid) hath ſo much Power of ſtirring up Fantaſms, and keeping them alive and fix'd before our Underſtanding, you ſhould not be troubled or afraid, if it ſhall happen at any time that you are not able to expel any ill Phantaſm out of your Imagination

after all your Attempts made to extinguish it. It will sometimes even take so deep Root in your Mind, that it will create you intolerable Pain and Sorrow, because you are not able to avoid it; and will occasion in you Fears of falling into Sin, and Perplexities and Scruples. And you shall be afflicted the more that you feel your Passions to struggle or ferment, or some Concupiscence, Hatred and Anger, corresponding with the quality of Images printed in your Fancy, and that so much the more that you seem to give your Assent: For your Sensual Inclination (that bears the shew of a Will, but is Counterfeit, and which is only a brutish and corporeal Appetite) will break out toward these Objects that Sense offers unto you. These Things bring devout Persons to greatest Extremities; but be not afraid. Endeavour to retire into a clean Spirit without Figures or Idea's, and to have a deep, conceal'd and spiritual Remembrance of God, without imagining any thing to your self, but believing him to be in you; but put on a firm and hearty Resolution never to offend him, nay, on the contrary to love him: And then let the Fancy and Passions storm and rage as much as they will. And if at any time the Strength of Temptation force you to incline

How the Soul should guard against them.

cline to Senſe and Imagination, and lead you out of the Road of Spiritual Faith, as ſoon as you are ſenſible of it, have Recourſe to the ordinary Preſence of God, and purpoſe to love him, (as I have juſt now ſaid) and fear not.

Of indifferent Idea's, and how our Soul ſhould deal with them.

4. As to the other indifferent Images or Figures, if you aſpire to true Perfection, and deſire Purity of Mind to pray well, avoid them, and be diligent to get rid of them. When your Obedience, Charity, your own or Neighbour's Neceſſity, require you to employ your Mind for ſome time on ſuch Objects or indifferent Fantaſms, you may in ſuch a caſe do it, directing your Intentions to the Glory of God: But endeavour with all ſpeed to be diſengaged from ſuch Viſions of Fancy which may injure your Spirit. Finally, let this great Sentence of that holy Man, *Johannes a Cruce*, be deeply rooted in your Heart, and ſerve for a fundamental Rule. *One ſingle Thought of Man* (ſays he) *is the moſt precious Thing in the whole World, and every Thought that regards not God is robb'd from him.* This is a Truth little underſtood by thoſe, who ſet not a due Rate upon a reaſonable Creature, and more eſpecially when it is in the State of Grace. Whoever underſtands his own Worth ſufficiently, knows

at the same time the great Beauty and Valuableness of his Internal Actions, and how great a Fault it would prove to employ them about idle and useless Things, whilst we can apply our Thoughts and Affections to God, the most excellent and worthy Object of our Hearts.

Of good Idea's.

5. The third kind of Similitudes in our Fancy, are Sacred Idea's, which represent to us either *Christ*, or some other Saint, or some Mystery of our Catholick Faith. These Imaginations are good, especially for Beginners, and those who attend Meditation. But to stand continually in Meditations of Fancy, and in Discourse or Reasoning, I confess, does not satisfie my Mind. But that Saying of our Saviour to the Woman of *Samaria* is of great weight with me; *The hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.* If he will be ador'd in Spirit and in Truth, why should we continually rely on Fancy, which is a Corporeal Faculty? Why should not the Soul rise above the Internal Senses, and Adore, Love, and Contemplate its invisible, incomprehensible, and most lovely God, with an untainted Heart and pure Faith:

Jo. 4.

Faith: But enough of this at preſent. Make therefore uſe of the good Repreſentations of Fancy, not only to excite the ſenſible Affections that depend upon them; but more eſpecially to help the Underſtanding in its pureſt Operations, and to reconcile your Will to the Heavenly and Holy Myſteries on which you meditate. However, beware of fixing your ſelf too much upon theſe Repreſentations; but only ſo far as they ſerve to move the Underſtanding to know, and the Will to love what is Good, and abhor what is Evil. Be not too vehement or raſh in Prayer, but peaceable and calm as much as is poſſible; and divert the Interruptions and Impertinencies of Fancy with a ſimple, unconſtrain'd, pleaſant and effectual Reſiſtance, and rely with purity of Heart on God, who is a Spirit tranſcendently pure.

How to uſe good Idea's.

6. And for preventing the Evils proceeding from the Fancy and Apprehenſion, I deſire you may conſider and learn theſe Rules: 1. Pray often, and humbly beſeech the Lord, to ſave you from pernicious Imaginations, and to grant you Strength to overcome your internal Rebellious Senſes. 2. Shun the Beginnings of theſe Fancies, Imaginations, and Thoughts, that may either draw you into Er-

Rules for the mortifying of our Fancy.

Error, or make you loſe Time. 3. Be ſimple and plain, in laying open your Temptations and Thoughts that come into your Head, before your Spiritual Guides, or Superiors, or to one who can, and is willing to direct you to Virtue, and to God, 4. Never deliberately nouriſh Phantaſms, or vain, uſeleſs and idle Thoughts; neither ſuperfluous Forecaſts of Things to come; nor Conjectures about hidden Matters, or what others are thinking on; nor give way to your Imagination to frame Chimera's, Whims, or any other fooliſh and airy Fancy. 5. But ſtrive earneſtly, by reading the Holy Scriptures and by Meditation, to fill your internal Senſes with Holy, Virtuous, Heavenly and Sacred Things, and eſpecially, with the Life, Doctrine, Paſſion and Sanctity of *Jeſus Chriſt*; who, as God, is the Object of our Spiritual Powers, and was made Man, that he might alſo become a fit Object for our Corporeal Faculties.

Letter XV.

To the same ——

1. *Of the Apprehending and Desiring Faculties.* 2. *The great Mischief arising from the wrong Apprehension of Things.* 3. *Self-Love and all Sins are rooted in it.* 4. *The false Opinions of Men about Evil.* 5. *Our Insufficiency without God.* 6. *Fundamental Maxims for preventing the false Conceits of inferiour Reason.*

1. IF ever these my Letters come to light, some may, perhaps, wonder, that when I am writing Directions for a Godly Life; I should not immediately enter upon the *Mortification* of the Passions, and of our own Will, and from thence proceed to *Charity*, which is *the Bond of Perfection*, as the Apostle terms it. But if I may be allow'd to give you my Thoughts; it was upon the Consideration, That we are reasonable Creatures, and that the Divine Grace must perfect us as to our Nature; and also, that our Passions are not excited, before an Apprehension and Conception is fram'd in our Senses, nor our Will moved, unless we first know with our Colos. 3.

Un-

Understanding: From hence I draw this certain Consequence: *That there is great necessity to apprehend Things perfectly, if we would wish to be perfect in the Management of our Affections and Passions.* We have two kinds of Powers and Faculties, the Apprehending and Desiring Faculty; which hold as well in the Body, as the Soul. Our Apprehending Faculties, as to our Body, are either External, namely, the Five Senses, of which we have already spoken; or they are Internal, which are the Four Internal Senses, namely, Common Sense, Fancy, (of which we have discours'd already) the Discerning Faculty, and the Memory, which in us is call'd *Reminiscence.* Again, in the Soul is the Apprehensive Power, and the Understanding. We have the Desiring Faculties in our Animal Body, and in our Soul, after the same manner: We have three kinds of Appetites, the Natural, the Sensitive, and the Reasonable or Spiritual. The Natural Appetite, is that which comes not from our Imagination or Understanding, but from the disposition of Natural Qualities, by which the Natural Faculties perform their Actions; as when the Stomach is empty, a Natural Desire or Appetite of Meat is felt; and when the Gums are dry, the Natural Desire

Two sorts of Faculties in Man, the Apprehensive and Appetitive.

ſire of Drinking is felt. This Notion of the Natural Appetite is not ſubject to Reaſon, and no Fault can lie in it.

The Senſitive and Reaſonable Appetites are guided by the Apprehenſive Faculties.

2. The Senſitive Appetite, which follows the former Imagination or Apprehenſion of Senſe, is called a Motion of Senſuality. But becauſe this Appetite follows the Apprehenſion of the Senſes, hence it comes, That if the Senſes are not reform'd, and well directed and guided by Grace and the Light of Reaſon, the inordinate Motion of Senſuality ſhall follow upon the diſorderly and confus'd Apprehenſion of the Senſes and Imagination. And ſeeing the Will can be moved (at leaſt indirectly) by the Paſſions, (becauſe they ſubvert the right Uſe of Reaſon, which depends on the Will) hence it comes, That he who cannot govern his Internal and External Senſes well, can neither rule his Paſſion for any conſiderable ſpace of Time; and he that cannot rule his Paſſions well, can no more have the Judgment of his Reaſon upright and pure: And he whoſe Judgment is not even and illuminated, ſhall fall into miſerable Faults and Errors, and ſhall not only miſs of Perfection, but alſo run the hazard of coming ſhort of Salvation.

3. When

The Roots of all Sins lie in the inferiour Reason.

3. When the Understanding stoops low, and sinks into the Inferiour Reason; my God, who can express to how many Mistakes it is obnoxious! In the Inferiour Reason, that is, in the Understanding thus sunk into this Sense, or into the Memory, which treasures up its Notions, are to be found the Roots of all Sins, and of all the Ruine and Desolation that befals a Soul. I am satisfied, that Self-Love and Pride are the Roots of our Faults and Errors; but their Roots again lie in this Inferiour Reason, and I will demonstrate to you how it comes to be so. O how happy should you and I, and all the World be, if we would, by the Grace of God and our enlighten'd Free-Will, remedy this Evil that is so widely spread! If Man knows not that he is, he cannot esteem himself. If he does not esteem himself, he cannot love himself. If he does not love himself, he cannot wish any good Thing for himself. You see in this Ladder and Gradation, how all depends on Knowledge. Whoever knows himself falsely, esteems himself falsely. Who so esteems himself the wrong way, loves himself the wrong way: And he that loves himself falsely, desires to himself a false Good. One who knows himself aright, puts a due Value on himself.

How the first Roots of Sin and Self-Love lie in the Apprehension of Inferiour Reason.

ſelf. One who eſteems himſelf well, that is, in the Truth, and according to the Truth, loves himſelf according to the Truth. He that loves himſelf in Truth, deſires a real Good. Behold the whole Salvation and Ruine of Man drawn into an Abſtract.

The falſe Opinions of Men about Evil.

4. Let us therefore ſeriouſly examine, what a large Fountain of Evils, inferiour Reaſon, together with its Opinions and Judgments, are; and let us ground our Examination on two Propoſitions of the Holy-Ghoſt. That dreadful Sentence of the Pſalmiſt may make any wiſe Heart to tremble; *The children of men are deceitful in the balance.* Pſal. 61 This (as St. *Baſil* obſerves) is not meant of Material Balances, which ſuit not with all; but of the Judgment of Reaſon, given us by God to diſcern and weigh real Evils and real Goods, and to diſtinguiſh them from falſe and apparent Ones; to know the exact Weight and Worth of things, and to take due Deliberations for the Glory of God, and our Eternal Salvation. Now Men are here Liars, and are miſtaken for the moſt part; and few have theſe Balances that are not falſe. We account the Wind and Clouds weighty, and call Mountains light. Each Good and each Evil of this Life, is Wind, Cloud, and vain, inſubſiſtent,

ſtent, and fleeting Air and Smoke. Every Thing paſſeth away, and faileth; and every Thing endeth in a moſt vain, *It was, and now it is not.* And yet for all this, we muſt, forſooth, value them at a high rate! O falſe Balances! It is God that is the Immenſe Mountain of Goodneſs. What a ſublime, weighty, ſubſiſtent, moſt precious and moſt lovely Mountain, is the Eternal Glory of Heaven, the Love of God, Grace, and all the Virtues that endear us to God. And on the other ſide, what a horrible Mountain is Hell, and the Eternal Loſs of the Chief Good; and yet Sin is heavier, which offends our moſt lovely Creator; And for all this, how little do we weigh and regard theſe Things? O falſe Balances! We muſt therefore make it our Chief Endeavour, to adjuſt theſe Balances of our Judgments; and believe me, that Meditation and Prayer muſt be for ſome time employed in order to know the moſt empty Vanity of the Creatures, when they are not referr'd to God, and our own Nothingneſs; and to know not to eſteem them for themſelves, and not conſidered with Reſpect to God. And we muſt ſtudy Night and Day to verifie that in our ſelves, which the great Mother of our Lord Jeſus did ſing, *My*

Soul

Soul doth magnifie the Lord. We muſt magnifie in us that God who is Immenſe in himſelf, and muſt encreaſe and exalt our Eſteem of him and his Glory, and of whatever is well pleaſing and acceptable to him; for this is true Chriſtian Philoſophy.

Our Inſufficiency without God.

5. O my God! let our Soul retire into it ſelf; let it come out of the Fleſh, and leave the Illuſions of the lying and deceiving Senſes, and light *the Lamp of God's Word* and of Faith, and diſcern, that in it ſelf, by it ſelf, and by vertue of its own Strength, it was Nothing, is Nothing, and ſhall be Nothing to all Eternity; and that it can do Nothing, knows Nothing, and poſſeſſes Nothing that is good and lovely. O my Soul! what can'ſt thou do without God? *Without me you can do nothing*, ſays Chriſt. What knoweſt thou? What Good haſt thou? *We are not ſufficient of our ſelves to think any* good *thing as of our ſelves:* but our *ſufficiency is of God*, ſaid the Apoſtle. Behold the Weakneſs, and Ignorance and Malice of Man without God! He is not able to think ſo much as one good Thought! And do we never think on it? And yet do we fancy that we have Being, Power and Wiſdom, or any other Thing that is Good, when we conſider our ſelves alone, and

Pſal. 119.

Jo. 13.

2 Cor. 3. 5.

with our Natural Knowledge? O blind, ignorant, fooliſh and wicked Natural Knowledge! for it is from thee that Pride and Self-Love take their Riſe; and from theſe two Roots ſpring the other Branches of Faults and Vices.

Some fundamental Maxims of Truth to be printed on our Underſtandings, to redreſs our Loſſes proceeding from the falſe Maxims of inferiour Reaſon.

6. But to be brief, and come to a Cloſe. Let us fix ſome fundamental Truths in our Heart. God is an immenſe Being, and all created Beings, if compar'd with him, are but a Shadow. God is ſo infinitely Good, that, in compariſon of him, all created Goodneſs is as an Atom. Eternity is ſo boundleſs a Duration, that the length of Time, in reſpect of it, is but like a Moment. *Jeſus Chriſt*, God and Man, is ſo high and elevated Wiſdom and Truth, that all Humane Wiſdom and Truth, if compar'd with him, is as an unſubſiſting and periſhing Shadow. The Grace of God and Charity, and all the other Chriſtian Virtues, together with their Acts, are ſo ſublime Riches, that all the Treaſures on Earth, if compar'd with them, are as Droſs or Dung. The immortal Glory of Paradiſe is ſo exceſſive and ſuperlative Sweetneſs, that, in parallel with it, all the Satisfactions of this World reſemble Heavineſs and Sorrow. To be condemn'd to Hell, is ſo terrible and tormenting a Puniſhment, that all the Pains

and

and Sorrows of this Life, if laid in the Balance with it, are as Reſt and Quietneſs. And finally, the leaſt Sin is an Evil ſo real and odious in the ſight of God, and ſo hurtful to Man, that all other Evils that can happen, either in Body or Soul, in this or the next Life, bears no Proportion to the offending of God, or committing of Sin; nay, they do not ſo much as deſerve the Name of Evils. And the Reaſon of this is plain and evident; becauſe Evil being a Privation oppoſed to a Good, the greater and more real the Good is to which this Evil is oppos'd, ſo much the more true and great is this Evil. But becauſe our Lord God is a Good ſo infinitely true and immenſe, that no created Good deſerves the Name of Good if compar'd with God; (the Conſideration of which made Chriſt, as Man, rebuke him, who call'd him Good, ſaying, *Why calleſt thou me good? None is good but God alone:*) Hence it is that we muſt conclude, That Sin only, ſtanding in oppoſition to God, and depriving us of him, is ſo real and great an Evil, that all the Evils of Puniſhment (directly willed by God, and no manner of way oppoſed to him) do not merit the Name of Evil in reſpect of Sin. Retain theſe Maxims of Chriſtian Truth ſtrongly in your Heart,

Mar. 10. & Luke 18.

and in my next you ſhall ſee how to apply them to their proper Uſes.

Letter XVI.

To the ſame ——

1. *The Danger of following Inferiour Reaſon.* 2. *How it debaſes the Soul.* 3. *What is eſteem'd Good and Evil by it.*

1. IF the Subject of my Diſcourſe, and the Operations of my reaſonable Soul, be concerning the Rule of Faith, and the Word of God, the holy Fathers, and the Examples of *Jeſus* and the true Servants of God, and about the Maxims of God's Glory, and our Eternal Salvation; I then employ my Superiour Reaſon. And if I willingly embrace, and actually perform what I underſtand by my Superiour Reaſon, I certainly (with the Aſſiſtance of Grace) tread the Path of Happineſs and Bliſs. But if I take the Grounds of my Diſcourſe from the Advantages, Pleaſures, the airy Vanities and Intereſt of the World and of this preſent Life, and follow ſuch crooked Rules by giving the full Aſſent of my Will to it, I then queſtionleſs drive on to

The Danger of following Inferiour Reaſon.

to Perdition, becauſe I follow the Conduct of my Inferiour Reaſon.

2. In brief; Some build and frame Thoughts, Apprehenſions and Judgments all the day long, and continually keep their Underſtanding ſteadfaſtly bent upon vile and contemptible Things; wherefore it is no Wonder, that ſuch Men live in continual Snares, Diſquiets, Contradictions, Inconſtancies, Paſſions, Wants, and moſt pitiful Miſeries. And in the mean time, our precious Soul, which is capable by the Benefit of Superour Reaſon, to ſoar up unto God on the Wings of our Underſtanding, and to be made like him, and become rather Heavenly than Humane; is clogg'd and pull'd down by the Senſes; and the Saying of the Kingly Prophet is verified in it: *Man being in honour* (that is, being like God) *hath no underſtanding, but is compared unto the beaſts that periſh.* Pſ. 49. 20.

How it debaſes the Soul.

3. The three great Imperfections of the Cogitative Faculty (as being Corporeal) do great Damage to the Soul, which is a Spirit. The firſt is, That it only knoweth and eſteemeth Corporeal Things. The ſecond is, That it conceives no other Good or Evil, beſides what is Temporal or Corporeal. And the third is, That it is much more moved by preſent and temporary

Three Imperfections of the Cogitative Faculty, and the great Miſchiefs that reſult from it.

Objects, than those that are far off, and to come. And because the Inferiour Reason (that is, the very Soul that debaseth its reasonable Understanding to this Internal Sense) borrows its Universal Notices and Knowledge from the Cogitative Faculty; it is also obnoxious to the same Imperfections, by receiving a great Conception of Corporeal Things, and the Evils and Goods of the Body, and present Objects, and by valuing and esteeming them. Now Remark the extream Miseries that accrue to Man from this. Every Thing naturally has a Liking to its own Being; and our Senses and Body desires not only Being, but also Well-Being. The Well-Being of the Body, depends upon the having of its Members and Faculties sound and entire, and from having Objects proportionable and pleasant to the same Faculties. Therefore when a Man has his Eyes in good Condition, and beholds Objects that are fine and delightful to the Sight; then that Sense has found its Paradise. A very healthy Palate, that tasts sweet Meats and delicious Wines, is call'd Happy. Here are therefore all the Goods of the Body, compriz'd in few Words, Interest, Health, and the Tast of Objects that are proportionable and delightful to all the Senses and Passions.

The Goods that our Senses covet.

The

The Privations that ſtand in oppoſition to theſe its Goods, are ſtil'd by the Body its True Evils. And becauſe Death deſtroys the Eſſence of the living Body; therefore it is the chiefeſt of Evils: Every Infirmity and Indiſpoſition, that ruins its Intereſt and Health, that is its Evil. And theſe Objects that create Diſturbance, Diſguſt, Sorrow or Pain to the Senſes, they are all, and every one of them, Evils. From all theſe, inferior Reaſon draws this great General Maxim of its wild Philoſophy; *That is Good which is Pleaſant, and that is Evil which is Unpleaſant.* Now who can reckon up the vaſt number of Sins, which the Will commits under the conduct of this falſe and perverſe Judgment of Reaſon? If that be our Good which pleaſeth us; alas! what Good, that really is ſo, does pleaſe us here in our low World? If that be Evil that diſpleaſeth us; alas! how many Virtues will we dislike? To which of the Senſes will Suffering be agreeable? Now how ſhall we be Perfect, if *Patience* (and it is a Truth of the Holy Ghoſt) *hath a perfect work?* Which of the Senſes are pleas'd with Penitence, Abſtinence and Auſterity, and Rules that ſet Bounds to our Licentiouſneſs, and, in brief, our ſo much neceſſary Mortifications? Is there any Soul (unleſs

And what their Evils are.

A Maxim of Inferiour Reaſon, and its bad Conſequences.

Ja. 1. 4.

it wean it it ſelf from the Senſes by the Grace of God) to whom Obedience is acceptable, Poverty, the denying of Themſelves, Humility, and Meekneſs, amidſt the Wrath and Tranſports of other Men's Anger; and other Virtues ſo hard to one, who will not *Take up his Croſs daily, and follow Chriſt?* And on the other ſide, alas! how agreeble is Vice to our Senſes! *The Eye is not ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor the Ear filled with hearing*, ſaid the Wiſe man. Can the Taſt, perhaps, ſatisfie its Appetite with Meats, or with moſt delicious Wines? Or can any of us eſcape innumerable Sins if we indulge our Senſes? We are therefore to fix this ſolid Truth in our Minds, which is grounded on the Example of *Jeſus*, God and Man. *Whatſoever is agreeable to our unruly Senſe, is not Good; and what it diſlikes, is not Evil. But whatſoever pleaſes the Superior Reaſon, illuſtrated by the Doctrines of Faith, is Good; and what is diſagreeable to it, is Evil. Whatſoever renders us like Jeſus, is Good; and whatſoever alienates us from this Reſemblance, is Evil.* Theſe Maxims are to be printed on our Hearts, and we are not to hearken to the Judgment of Senſe, or Inferiour Reaſon in particular Caſes; and we are to have immediate Recourſe to ſome of theſe Maxims, or to others that I have laid down to you in the

Luk. 9.

Eccl. 9 8.

Holy Maxims of Superiour Reaſon, and of Faith.

the other Part; and that we, by applying it to the Case in hand, may make use of its Light for the determination of our Wills, and that we may act in such a manner, that our Affections and Actions may tend to the Glory of God, and the Salvation of our own Souls.

Letter XVII.

To the same ——

1. *Temptations in Matters of Faith, and Predestination.* 2. *A Remedy against the Temptations about Predestination and Faith.* 3, 4. *How to know real Goods and Evils.*

1. I Have told you, That the *Cogitative* or Esteeming Faculty understands and estimates Things which are only Corporeal; it is therefore incapable of Spiritual Objects. But because the Beauty of Spiritual Virtue is Incorporeal; it follows, that this Faculty does not know nor esteem the Splendour of the finest Virtues, seeing they are Spiritual. And because our Lord God is not only a Spirit, but infinitely purer than any created Incorpopeal Substance; it follows, that this Faculty

The Cogitative Faculty knows no real Beauties and Excellencies, for Spiritual Excellencies are only such.

culty is uncapable of knowing him. Behold how low and mean it is! and you ſhall preſently perceive the Method that the Devil takes to frame Temptations in it, thereby to ſhake our Faith. He lays his Snares there, by clouding the Superiour Reaſon, and awakening all the Activity of this Corporeal Faculty, ſo that Man thinks that every Thing depends on it. And then he cries loudly to our Soul, (what was ſaid to the Prophet) *Where is thy God?* And makes it ſeemingly appear, that neither Eternity, nor Spiritual Things, nor God himſelf, neither are, nor can be. And it ſeems ſo true to this dull Faculty, that it perplexes the Soul to the greateſt Degree. After the ſame manner, becauſe this Power is Corporeal, and ſubjected to Time, and knows Things in a temporal way, by diſtinguiſhing the Paſt, Preſent, and the Future; the Devil (and ſometimes our own Reaſon) frames moſt ſubtle Snares concerning the incomprehenſible Buſineſs of being Predeſtinated or Reprobated: And reduces the Soul to inexpreſſible Sorrow and Diſtreſs; and ſtarts Arguments that appear unanſwerable. Remiſs and looſe Souls certainly draw very bad Concluſions from this fallacious Argument, *If I be predeſtinated I ſhall be ſaved, &c.* I am fully perſwaded of this, but will not en-

How and where the Devils form their Temptations againſt Faith.

Pſ. 42. 3.

Temptations about Predeſtination.

enlarge further on it. And such a Temptation inflicts on Spiritual Persons the Pains of Death, and *Bonaventure* and blest *Henry Suson* knew it by Experience. Now as to all these Things, I say, that the Soul must use its utmost Endeavour to state it self in a Purity of Spirit; and get out of the low and crawling Inferiour Reason, and place it self in naked and spiritual Truth.

A Remedy against the Temptation of Predestination.

2. And what concerns the second Temptation, which I have laid down, Experience hath shewn me, that this is the best Remedy, Never at all to reason the Matter, but to betake your self to Truth, and constantly to stand and abide there immoveable in Spirit. This is Truth, that God is Eternal, and what is Eternal allows of no *Priority* or *Posterity*, nor yet of any Succession; but is purely immutable and unmoveable, and comprehends all Times, without being alter'd or chang'd by their Vicessitudes or Variations. And because the Divine Understanding is nothing beside God; it follows, that he with one eternal and unvariably present Veiw, seeth all Things and all Times, without laying any Necessity on the Actions of unconstrain'd and free Agents, such as Men are. So that we must not strictly say of God, *He hath foreseen, he hath done, he hath decreed*; be-

becauſe this way of Speaking is only agreeable to Humane Underſtandings, and denotes a Time paſt, and Objects to come; but theſe two Differences of Time are not in God, who *knows the Things of old, and thoſe of yeſterday*, with one unmoveable and continually preſent View. For God in Truth ſees, and that unchangeably, and beholds the Preſent the ſame way as he does the Future, even Times, Ages and Eternity. Whoſoever then is tempted on the point of Predeſtination, let him ſuddenly have Recourſe to this Truth, that he cannot fathom the Way that God underſtands Things, no more than a Horſe comprehends how Man underſtands. And thus with a holy and ſimple Humility, confeſs your Ignorance of God's incomprehenſible way of Underſtanding, and make it your Buſineſs to love him, and ſerve him, without putting it to the Teſt of your own Wit: We muſt be eaſy, and wait with Patience; for it is a great Truth that the Divine *Areopagite* utter'd, *One unites himſelf moſt ſtrictly and beſt to God in this Life, who does it as to him actually unknown.* Earth is made to love the Almighty by believing; and Heaven to love him by knowing. St. *Bonaventure*, from his own Experience, taught Perſons that are tempted to believe themſelves Predeſtinated, what they

they ſhould anſwer the Devil, *Let God diſpoſe of me as he thinks fit, but for thee, 'tis paſt all Diſpute, thou art damn'd. And tho' I ſhould not be ſav'd, I will love God in this Life as much as I can, that I may at leaſt poſſeſs him now in time by loving him.* 'Tis not Paradiſe that renders God lovely, but he is ſo of himſelf; I will therefore love him, even tho' Paradiſe had not been ordain'd for me. In ſhort, a great deal of Love, and little Nicety, does the Buſineſs.

How to maſter Temptations againſt Faith.

3. *Temptations againſt Faith,* (ſaith the ſame Learned Doctor) *and likewiſe that of Blaſphemy, and the like, cannot be avoided or maſter'd by Wreſtling with them; becauſe the more we rage and are vexed at our ſelves, or the more we diſpute with ſuch Temptations, their Rage is ſo much the more provok'd and kindled. But they ſhould never be minded, nor dreaded (if we conſent not to them) and their Importunities muſt be patiently endur'd; as Whiſperings and Inſinuations of the Devil; there being no other way to reſtrain them.*

Another Remedy againſt them.

Such kind of Temptations (continues the Saint, and remark it well) *do not prove dangerous to Good Souls, but are certain Preſages of a greater Grace and Comfort to follow on the back of them. And are the Purgers of Vice, and the occaſion of extraordinary Rewards.* To this I add, That I will truſt the more

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in God, the leſs I underſtand or comprehend his Myſteries. He ſhould not be Infinite, Incorporeal, or God, if I could Fathom them with my Corporeal and limited Imagination and Senſes. Therefore our Ignorance, and not knowing of him, proceeds from our Stupidity and Blindneſs, and from his Immenſity and inacceſſible Purity; therefore the leſs that I comprehend him, and that his Myſteries are repreſented to me by the Tempter for incredible Ones, ſo much the more will I account my ſelf Ignorant and Blind, and him to be the more tranſcendent and infinite Light: And ſo much the more will I love and adore him.

To arrive at Perfection, we muſt practiſe three Virtues, and avoid their oppoſite Vices.

4. Here I muſt briefly intimate to you the Reaſon, why one, who aims at a perfect Life, eſpecially by the way of Contemplation and a lively Faith, muſt neceſſarily poſſeſs three Virtues among others in an eminent degree, namely, an entire and abſolute Impartiality, or freedom from Intereſt, or a Love of Poverty, Temperance and Chaſtity. The Vices oppoſed to theſe three Virtues, have Corporeal Objects and Ends which debaſe the Soul, and make it fall as low as the Sphere of Inferiour Reaſon, the Cogitative Faculty, and our Imaginations and Phantaſms. But Faith has God, who

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is purely Spiritual, for its moſt excellent Object; and the Soul that walks in Faith, is employ'd in the Conſideration of inviſible Things, that are remote from the low Faculties. Contemplation is performed in the ſublimeſt Part of the Spirit, made pure from the Senſes and bodily Affections; which infers a Neceſſity of the Soul's being far removed from the Objects of theſe three Vices I have mentioned, namely, Gluttony, Laſciviouſneſs, and Avarice; and our own Thoughts, Senſes, and Inferiour Reaſon.

The Effects of adviſing with our Senſes.

Theſe bad Counſellors will make every preſent Object appear great, lovely, and abundantly Attractive, if it be delightful, honourable, or what may tend to advance your Reputation or Advantage in this World. As on the other hand, they will make the preſent Evils frightful and terrifying, and will load you ſometimes with the Shame of being reputed Spiritual, and of being derided and mocked by others; ſometimes with Fears of loſing your happy Health; ſometimes with Dread, leſt you want wherewithal to live, if you ſhould ſpend too much Time on Prayer; or with other Ways and Methods that magnify the Goods and Evils of this Life, and annihilate and leſſen thoſe of the other.

You

You must therefore get this most sure Rule by Heart, and never depart from it in your Practice.

Heavenly Maxims for a truly Christian and Virtuous Life.

Say within your self, *This Good which now appears, is it known by my Senses, and is it their Good? It is therefore of little Moment. This Evil, would it be an Evil to this Temporal Life only? It is therefore a small Evil, tho' it were Death it self. Nor even does that deserve the Title of Good, nor this of Evil. True Good and Evil, is the Good and Evil of our Soul in reference to God.* To be depriv'd of God, our chiefest Good, for one Moment in the other Life, this is a real Evil: Think then what an endless Hell will amount to! Every Virtue that leads us to God, is a real Good. Each higher Step to Eternal Glory, and a clearer Knowledge of God, and purer Love towards our dearest, Uncreated, and Immense Good, these are the Things that are really Good.

LETTER XVIII.

To the ſame ——

The Devil cannot prevail upon us, unleſs he make himſelf Maſter of our Cogitative Faculty. 2. And by what Maxims he gains That of worldly-minded men. 3. The falſe Opinions that Spiritual Perſons entertain of Themſelves. 4. And of Sins and ſmall Virtues. 5. And of their own Natural Diſpoſition. 6. And that of others.

MY Method leading me to ſpeak ſomething concerning the Devil's Temptations in this Faculty: I have a Mind to ſubjoin a few more uſeful Inſtructions to this Purpoſe.

That Malicious Spirit is well aſſur'd, that he has got little or no ground on Man, until he has firſt prevail'd upon his *Cogitative Faculty* and the Eſtimations and Opinions both of it and the Inferior Reaſon: and here it is he lays his ſtrongeſt Ambuſhes and Batteries. To what Purpoſe ſhould he ſet up the Image of any Object in our Fancy, if the Inferior Reaſon did not eſtimate it? And if the Devil ſhould offer whole Bags of Money to the Mind of ſome rare and

extraordinary Perſons wholly denied to their Intereſt, and who value Gold no more than Duſt, I pray you what could he get at their Hand? Surely an abſolute Repulſe and Diſappointment. A Thing is ſo much the more amiable or hateful, in proportion as it is eſteemed ſo by the Soul. It is from this Variety of Rates and Values Men put upon Things that the ſo great Diverſity of Human Actions proceed, and that one Man affects a Thing, which is neglected and undervalued by another. Theſe Men act well that love well: and theſe love well who ſet a juſt Value on Things, and eſteem them aright. And becauſe our Happineſs or Damnation depends upon our good, or bad Love, and it again on our Eſteem and Fancy, hence we are to expect that the chief and moſt impetuous Sallies of Hell will be levell'd at our Eſtimative, or Cogitative Faculty. Now let us ſee the Way how this is done, that we may guard our ſelves againſt it. Suppoſe that Sentence of *Heſychius* a Greek Prieſt for certain (as indeed it is) namely, *It is not in the Devil's Power to raiſe Thoughts or ſuggeſt Lyes to deceive us, without Images or Idea's.* Let this then be our firſt general Rule, that one who is moſt careful not to liſten to the Imaginations and falſe O-

pinions

pinions that haunt his Mind, and has made it his Buſineſs to ſoar aloft in Purity of Spirit, and without Images, and Forms, to the inviſible Preſence of his lovely God, ſuch a one has as good as deluded and vanquiſhed all the Devices and Artifices of the Devil. But where is the Man to be found who continually does ſo, and we will applaud him? Such Souls need no other Books: becauſe *He that holds his inward eyes ſtill fix'd on the Lord* (according to the Prophet) *ſhall have God always ready to pluck his feet*, that is, the Affections of his Soul, *out of the net.* Pſ. 25. 14.

How the Devil tempts worldly-minded Men, and what Opinions he ſuggeſts to them.

2. The Devil is therefore at great pains to infuſe Imaginations and Opinions into our Brain: and he more eſpecially heightens and magnifies the Eſteem of Earthly Things to Worldly-minded Men. Theſe poor Souls are not ſenſible that they are tempted, and yet they are thus abus'd every Hour. Their Tempter makes no Noiſe with them: becauſe he finds that they will eaſily liſten to his Perſwaſions. This wicked Spirit endeavours to keep the worſt of Principles, which we have drunk in from great Men, ſtill freſh and vigorous. That it is a glorious thing to revenge Injuries: and the Height of Vileneſs and Infamy to do otherwiſe. That One who has got a Challenge ſent him,

ought to accept of it, and that it argues Cowardice in him to decline it. That we ought above all things to have regard to the Honour of our State and Character, and to our own private Advantage and that of our Children and Family, and by all means poſſible to ſeek how we may improve it, and not to ſtand ſo much upon the Punctilio of Conſcience, or of running the Risk of offending God by the tranſgreſſing of his Precepts. That we ought not to bear with Damage or Deriſion, nor any thing to the prejudice of our Eſteem, Intereſt, Pleaſures and Satisfactions: but if any one offend us, to return it in kind and to the full. That we ought to defend our Goods and Life, or recover our Health by any means whatſoever: nor to give our ſelves the Trouble to ask the Advice of Learned, Wiſe and Godly Men; when we are to make an Advantageous Bargain or Agreement, or to gain a Law-Suit, or avoid Impriſonment, or to recover Health by Remedies unknown to Phyſicians themſelves, tho' the Devil their Contriver be perfectly well acquainted with them. Theſe and ſuch like Dictates ſtick always cloſe to the Hearts of many Perſons; and the Devil when Occaſion ſerves (and that is not once in an Age, but almoſt continually)

tinually) revives them: which cauſes them to break forth into a thouſand Vices, and what is worſe, if they forſake not theſe their rooted Opinions of Sins, and their Reſolutions of walking according to theſe Deviliſh Maxims, and if they do not ſeriouſly purpoſe and reſolve, to act quite contrary to them, by ſubmitting them and what concerns them, to the Law of God, and to the Love which we owe to him, who can tell, in how little ſtead their Confeſſion may ſtand them. This is a moſt weighty and valuable Truth. A firm Purpoſe, ſo very neceſſary to the Validity of Abſolution, is a thing that *is important, arduous, ſublime, and difficult* (eſpecially to Souls that have contracted bad Habits) *and many will not take the Pains, or Trouble, to aſpire with all their might to ſo high a Matter, nor do they uſe their Induſtry to obtain it, but pretend or falſly perſwade themſelves that they poſſeſs it.* And hence it comes, that ſo many confeſs with *a Superficial, Verbal, dry and ineffectual* Reſolution. Let all Chriſtians mutually help and aſſiſt one another, to loſe their Opinion of this World, and to acquire an Eſteem of Heaven, Vertue, and of God.

P. Corn. à *Lapid.* *St.* Jam. 2.

3. But becauſe you have retired and addicted your ſelf to a devout Life; we

What deceitful Opinions he ſuggeſts to Spiritual Chriſtians.

will make it appear in few words, that many falſe Opinions are ſown in ſuch Souls, ſometimes ſecretly by the Devil himſelf, and ſometimes by Men, and which is more by Religious Men. Pernicious is that Opinion which I find in many devout Perſons, namely that Holineſs was not ordain'd for them: that it is no ſmall Matter to be ſaved; that every one cannot overcome the World: and that it would be a Preſumption, and Spiritual Pride to aim at a higher Degree of Perfection: and ſuch like Thoughts, which are apt to deprive our Soul of the Strength of Hope, and of an Eſteem of the immenſe and inexhauſtible Bounty of God: and they are directly contrary to the Word of God, who ſaith in ſeveral Places. *Ye ſhall therefore be holy for I am holy: Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect:* and *This is the Will of God, even your ſanctification: And He that is righteous let him be righteous ſtill; and he that is holy let him be holy ſtill:* and many more Expreſſions which I paſs by. If every one of us who are Chriſtians would by Faith live anſwerable to the Grace and Calls of God, we ſhould all be perfect according to the Meaſure of Gifts and Graces beſtowed upon us by Chriſt, and according

The firſt Eſtimate which leads us into Cowardice.

Lev. 2.
Matth. 5.
1 Theſ. 4. 3.
Apoc. 22. 2.

to

o our Conformity to them. He that is prevail'd upon by the Opinion, that he s not able to arrive at Perfection, will not take the pains to attain it; and tho' he labour, I confeſs, he ſhall not obtain t, but it is his own Fault and not the Defect of God's Mercy. Nor is it Pride o endeavour after it, provided we diſtruſt our own Strength, and confide in God and the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt. One who has got a Cold in Winter, cannot be reckon'd proud, becauſe he deſigns, and is deſirous to enter a Bagnio and expell it by Sweating. *I can do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthens me.* Phil. 4.

4. That it is a dangerous Eſteem, which comes from the ſmall Account we make of Light Sins, and inconſiderable Omiſſions that do not in our Judgment bind us over to Sin: and when we ſlight Virtues of the lower rank. It is ordinary to uſe idle Words, little Ridicules caſt at our Neighbour, the wandring of our Eyes and other Senſes, the pleaſing of our Palate, ſome petty jocoſe and officious Lyes, a ſlender Detraction, a Flaſh of Anger, and other light Faults, of which the Divine Song ſpeaks thus, *Take us the Foxes, the little Foxes that ſpoil the Vines.* And if we will Reflect upon it, or if we feel remorſe of Conſcience; Something, I know not what, preſently *The Second Opinion anent ſmall Sins.* Cant.

ſently tells us from within, *O it is Nothing.* And it is told us from without, *O they are but Doubts and Scruples.* And now and then Perſons of Authority and Credit, and perhaps Directors themſelves make this Road wide which Chriſt aſſures us, *is ſtraight, and that there be few that find it.* The ſame may be ſaid of the ſmaller Virtues, and of the ſmall Mortifications, that may be continually exercis'd; and are indeed omitted, and lie neglected, becauſe they are little eſteem'd, and the Devil labours to diminiſh that little Eſteem we have for them. After this manner do Tranſgreſſions, and Remiſsneſs in Religion leiſurely grow upon us. I am at firſt amaz'd to obſerve the Strictneſs of ſome Young Beginners, eſpecially of the Reform'd Orders: and afterward to ſee, that as much as they grow in Years, they equally decreaſe and degenerate in their moſt exact Mortification, and the ſtrict Command over their Eyes and Tongue, and other Senſes, which they profeſs'd and practis'd at the firſt. I level this my Diſcourſe at no particular Perſon, and I wiſh there were no need for theſe my Words. A light Sin is no ſmall Matter, for which the Word made Man, ſuffer'd Pain and Torment, and which ſhall be puniſh'd in the next Life, with the Deprivation

Matt. 5. *And concerning ſmall Virtues.*

of

of so infinite a good, as *God* is. An Act of Virtue or of Observance tho' never so inconsiderable, is of no small Moment, which is answered with the suitable Returns of greater Degrees of Grace, Eternal Glory, and a clearer Vision of the most amiable Divine Essence, and finally of a most sweet and endless Happiness in it, and Fruition of it. O Grace, O Glory, O Eternity, how little are you known! And indeed the least Portion of Grace or Glory is of greater Value than all the Natures that God has created both in Heaven and Earth.

The false Opinion of our own Disposition.

5. Some fancy themselves to be of a bad Constitution; and therefore unfit to be taken up about Perfection. One saith, I am of a Peevish and Cholerick Temper, and am not able to mend it: and by such a Perswasion they never strive to mortify themselves. The Second, I am Melancholick or Hypochondriack, and hardning themselves in this Opinion, they let them be transported by their unruly Natural Disposition, and never use that earnest Diligence they ought, to vanquish it. And The Third, I am of a tender and delicate Complexion: and another, I was nicely brought up, and cannot endure Austerities: so that some of us with one Pretence, and others with another, use all our

our Endeavour to elude the Pains, and Care neceſſary towards the ſubduing of our rebellious Nature, and the regulating of all our Faculties. But I ſay, you need not in the Caſe of Godlineſs and Religion, to reckon upon it if you have Natural Parts, or none at all, becauſe the principal Agents in the Buſineſs of Chriſtian Perfection, muſt be the Grace of God and the Reſolutions of our Free-will: for theſe are not confin'd to Complexions or Natural Endowments. I confeſs, that a weak Body cannot undergo ſome extraordinary Auſterities; but who requires them at your hands? For in order to real Sanctity, it is not requir'd of a poor Labourer to give as much Alms as a King or Prince; nor is it required, that One of a delicate Complexion, ſhould undergo thoſe Mortifications, which are more proper for rougher Natures and Conſtitutions. For indeed there is no Natural Inclination that can force your Will to yield Aſſent to its Freaks and Corruptions: or that can hinder you to will all ſort of Virtues, and eſpecially theſe that are Internal, and above all the Love of God. Your Nature, and the Devil (who conſpires with it to our great Damage) can make you feel rebellious and vehement Motions, and can cauſe you to fall

Anſwer to ſuch Opinions.

ll into ſome raſh and inconſiderate Faults nd Miſtakes, but as ſoon as you are a- vare of that Evil of Sin, if you would ſe your utmoſt Endeavours as you ought o do, and have recourſe to your God, here is no Natural Inclination or Devil, hat can force you to Sin: nor is there ny created Power able to hinder your Free-will, why it may not de- ire Virtue and God. Diveſt your ſelf hen of ſuch Eſtimates and Opinions, and make it your whole Buſineſs to purchaſe truly Chriſtian Perfection.

Errors ariſing from our Opinion of other Mens Diſpoſitions.

6. What I have ſaid concerning your Natural Diſpoſition: may be likewiſe fitly applied to others. A true Servant of God muſt never ſay, This, or that Perſon's Nature does not agree with mine. It does no manner of way ſuit with my Genius or Temper. Nor muſt you make any Diſtinction of Native Places, or Countries, or of the Varieties of Religions, or of Nations, States or Profeſſions: which may give occaſion to ſay, I cannot conform my ſelf to this or the other Man: and it is really their Opinion that it cannot be done. Moſt vain Apprehenſions! O Human Opinions, how much Miſchief do you create us We are all Members of one Myſtical Body, and our only Head is Chriſt: neither do the Members

1 Cor. 12.

of

of our material Body, look upon their Inequality as enough to ſtate a Contradiction among them: but they rather ſuccour one another with their ſo different Qualities. When was the Fleſh that is ſoft at any time hated by the Bone that is hard. When did ever the Eye that is delicate and noble, deride the Hand that is hard and callous, or the Foot that is dirty and ignoble? And then, to what purpoſe are all theſe Opinions? Every Soul was created by one *God*, they were all redeem'd by one *Saviour*, all honoured with the ſame Sacraments; and all call'd to the ſame Eternal Glory. Why do we then regard caſual and tranſitory Externals, that will ſhortly end with this periſhing Life? Beſide, who was it that created the Nature of Men and Women? It was certainly GOD. But has not he perhaps done it well? Who art thou O Man, who wouldſt have every thing according to thy Mind? *God* is pleas'd to evidence his wiſe Omnipotence by creating a variety of Things: and why wilt thou find fault with them, or trouble thy Head about them? Why doſt thou not then reſiſt and reſtrain thy Inclinations? Why do not *Love*, *Grace*, and *Mortification* maſter thy corrupt Nature? Let ſuch Opinions therefore ceaſe among the

Servants

Servants of God, let Sympathies and Antipathies the great Plagues of Societies, ceaſe. Let Superior Reaſon govern the Body: let Faith enlighten the Reaſon, and Love enflame it, and move it: and ſo all ſhall go well with us.

LETTER XIX.

1. We muſt have a good Opinion of our Neighbours, and particularly of thoſe that are ſet over us. 2. What Opinions are repugnant to Humility. 3. A Collection of a number of Sins that ſpring from falſe Opinions. 4. Rules for the Direction of the Cogitative Faculty, and its Opinions. 5. What ſort of an Opinion we ought to entertain of our ſelves.

How we muſt have a good Opinion of our Neighbours.

1. A good Opinion of our Neighbours is a Nurſery of good Works to them; as a bad one is a Soil Fruitful of many Faults. Think ſtill that the Holy Ghoſt can work great and ſecret things in the Souls of your Siſters: and endeavour to eſteem them as *Temples of the Living God.* And let not the Defects and Imperfections you may ſeem to diſcover in them, leſſen or remove your Eſteem of them. Such Defects may in all probability

1 Cor. 6.

bability ſerve to encreaſe and foment thei
Humility. And perhaps they will not
have the ſame Effect in them as they
might have in you. And further, how
do you know to what Degree of Glory
God has determin'd to exalt them? Reck-
on them all predeſtinated, and harbour a
holy Fear for your ſelf only. But much
greater muſt the Opinion be which you
ought to have of Prelates, Confeſſors,
and the Overſeers of your Soul. O how
much Care does the Devil take to give us
an ill Opinion of them; I cannot hinder
my ſelf from acquainting you with the
S. J. Clim. Grad. 4. ſound Doctrine of *John Climachus*. *That we may ſtill preſerve that Fealty and Religious Zeal due to our Paſtors, we muſt needs mind the Spiritual Benefit we have received from them, that we may ſtop the Devil's Mouth when he endeavours to ſuggeſt miſgiving Thoughts of them. Becauſe the greater Confidence we put in them, the more ready Obedience will we pay them. Whoever is mov'd by Jealouſy and Diffidence to judge his Biſhop; falls into the Sin of Pride: and every Action of his is tainted with Sin. When your Mind inclines you to Judge your Paſtor, avoid it, for it is a baſe and unworthy Thought: give no Reſt nor Entry to this Serpent, neither leave it a door at which it can enter. But tell*

that

hat Dragon, go hence thou Impoſtor, for I m not my Biſhops Judge tho' he be mine. Hitherto Saint *Climachus* and his Words re very remarkable. It is then a very aſe Opinion to think that your Superior as not Light: That he is not diſcreet: That he has not Charity, or is partial: That he is our Enemy: That he is not fit o govern us: That he is too rigorous, nd the like, a Venom fit to poyſon our Obedience. And it is a moſt baſe thing to ompare or rate the preſent Superior with is Predeceſſor, and to give the Prefe- ence to the one, at the Expence of the Eſteem we owe to the other. And which s worſe, ſuch Opinions are not hatch'd n our Hearts: but are alſo broach'd with our Tongue: and the Venom becomes ontagious, and one corrupt Member in- ects another.

2. The Eſteem of Dignities, Pre-emi- nence, and Humane Prudence, that are directly contrary to Humility and Sim- plicity; is alſo the pernicious Portion of Religious Societies. O my God, how much Damage do excellent Souls receive from the Eſtimates that are put upon Health, Wit, Precedency, and the Fa- vour and Applauſe of Men! No leſs hurt- ful is the Eſteem of Worldly Proſperity, Grandure, Worldly Nobility, Riches, and Parentage;

What Opinions are contrary to Humility.

Parentage; which are even retain'd in Religious Houſes, and ſerve for ſecret Nurſeries of Self-Conceit, and Contempt of others, as if the Apoſtle had not ſaid, 1 Cor. 1. *ibique Cor.* *Not many wiſe after the Fleſh, not many mighty, nor many noble; but God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world to confound the wiſe; and God hath choſen the weak things of the World to confound the things which are mighty: And baſe things of the world, and things which are deſpis'd, hath God choſen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are reputed great* Luke 16. *in the world.* And before him our Saviour had ſaid in general. *For that which is highly eſteemed amongſt men is abomination in the ſight of God.* Words which, if deeply conſidered, and practis'd on all occaſions, may ſerve to diſappoint all the Vanitity of our Opinions, ſo much the more cheated by Senſe, as they are apt to eſteem ſenſible things.

A Complex of Sins that ariſe from the Cogitative Faculty and inferior Reaſon. 3. To comprehend much in few Words; Whoever values himſelf upon his Wit, or Nobility, Degree, Riches, or Party and Following he has in the World, or on the Repute of Sanctity, or upon any other Price or Merit of his own; falls into Pride, Vain Glory, Hypocriſy, Ambition, Preſumption, and ſuch like Vices, and into the ſlighting and diſdaining of others

over

over and above. One who reckons Meat or drink his good falls into Gluttony. Whoſoever eſteems his Goods or Intereſt, falls into Avarice. Not to mention here that Vice, which St. *Paul* would not have Eph. 5. 3. to be ſo much as nam'd. One who thinks Eaſe and Sloth ſweet and pleaſant, ſinks into Lazineſs, and Effeminacy of Mind. And in ſhort, whoſoever eſteems any created thing here below, his Good, ſo as to rely and build upon it, runs Infallibly into ſome one Sin or other. And on the other hand, whoever thinks it his Misfortune to be excell'd or out-done in any thing by his Neighbour, falls into Envy: And whoever eſteems it his Evil to be Employed in Spiritual Exerciſes, or in what concerns the Glory of God, falls into Indifferency and Careleſsneſs. One who takes any Diſobligement, that excites him to Revenge, for an Evil, flies out into Anger: He who eſteems it an Evil, to be ſubmiſſive and ſelf-denied, runs into Diſobedience: Whoſoever reckons the Strictneſs of Rules and Precepts an Evil, falls into In-obſervance. And in brief, whoſoever eſteems that his great Evil, which contradicts his Senſe and Inferior Reaſon, I know not how he can avoid from ſinking into Faults and Vices.

How one who aspires after Perfection must behave himself as to Esteems.

4. From what has been already said, and what you may gather beside, I draw this for an End and Conclusion of my Discourse, That a Soul that aims at a truly Christian Perfection, must needs as much as in it lies, avoid the Particular Estimates of the Cogitative Faculty, as also the General Estimates and Opinions of the Inferior Reason: and must still elevate it self to the Superior, that there by the Force of Faith it may find *God,* 1 John 2. who penetrates our Essence, *and is in us, and we in him.* It is necessary to enrich and store your Superior Reason with good Maxims, such as these I have expresly sent you in this and other Letters, drawn from the Holy Writings: and you must weigh them, and govern your particular *Jo. a Cruce.* Actions by them. *We ought not to dwell too much on the Exercise of these Faculties and the Senses, or be wholly taken up in them but so far as is precisely requisite.* I am very well convinc'd that we are Travellers, and mortal, and that we carry the Burden of this miserable Body: and for this Reason it is not possible to avoid all sort of Commerce and Intercourse with its Faculties. I do not exact this of you: but only desire and entreat you to use them with great Caution and Circumspection: seeing they are very dangerous Beasts, and prone to rebel

rebel, and draw the Soul downward becauſe they are Earthly. You muſt therefore endeavour to raiſe them towards Heaven, which is your Spirits native Country, and for this End I will ſet you ſome Rules. 1. Make much Uſe of this Maxim of St. *Thomas*, *When our Mind fixes on temporal Things ſo as to reſt there, it remains depreſs'd and immur'd in them: but when it beholds them in order to obtain Happineſs, then it is not depreſs'd, but rather rais'd higher by them.* 2. And therefore you are to ſupport theſe poor and feeble Faculties continually with the Light of Faith and Affections of Charity, by inclining them to thoſe Virtues for which they were intended: and reſolve to keep them united to the Holy Humane Nature of *Jeſus*, which will be their Beatifical Object to all Eternity. This was one of the Ends which *God* propoſed to himſelf in becoming Man, namely to be our total Object both on Earth and in Heaven. 3. Take Delight in reading Spiritual Books, and eſpecially the Lives of the Saints, that you may repleniſh your Memory with their marvellous Actions and with Inſtances of their Virtue. And thus by reflecting upon, and highly valuing their particular and wonderful Deeds, it will prove an eaſy thing to have a low Eſteem

1. *Rules for the regulating of our Apprehenſions and Opinions.*

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for these things that are merely humane: and to be furnish'd with holy Matter with which you may conveniently feed your Internal Senses and the Affections of your
4. Heart. 4. I have also found it profitable (especially for these in whom these Faculties are brisk and active) to read, and learn sacred Songs, and Poems that are truly devout, and wherein Spirit and not Vanity are to be found. For this Purpose did I allow some of my Verses to be published, which are not perhaps unknown to you. And this did St. *Paul* teach us
Eph. 5. & Col. 3. when he desir'd us *To speak to our selves in Psalms and hymns and spiritual Songs, singing and making melody in our heart to*
5. *the Lord.* 5. Think often upon some Passage of the Holy Gospel, or some other Place of the Sacred Scripture, or of some holy Father, or at least some Virtuous Purpose and Resolution to resist the
6. Temptations of the Devil. 6. Put a great, nay very great Value on the blessed Sacrament, and quicken that Esteem by frequently meditating on your Saviour's
7. Passion. 7. Make never any Ecclesiastical Thing your Recreation or Sport: but still believe (what is really true) that every thing is full of Heavenly Mysteries.
8. 8. Esteem the Word of God at a high rate: and hear him who delivers it as if he

he were an Angel ſent from Heaven on that Embaſſy: without regarding his natural or artificial Talents, but the Subſtance of the Truths which he teaches. 9. And when you have occaſion to ſpeak of divine Things, do it with a reſpectful Eſteem and awful Reverence. 10. In fine, endeavour ſtill to eſteem that more which is not ſeen than that which is ſeen. Thus the Apoſtle did not look at viſible things, that are frail and temporal; but at inviſible things which are immortal and eternal. Eſteem alſo in your Neighbours that which is inviſible (namely Faith whereof they partake, and what God prepares for them) before what is viſible, and of a much leſs Value.

9. 10. 2 Cor. 4. 18.

6. And in fine, eſteem your ſelf daily leſs and leſs: and God grant that you may come one day to have no Opinion at all of your ſelf. If ever any thing will perſwade you, that you are of any Moment or real Worth, ſhun it, for it is the Devil; For he that ſuggeſts Reaſons to you for this, is certainly no good Spirit. *It is no ſmall matter to decline the vain Applauſe of Men, but it is a far greater to hold out againſt the internal Praiſes of the Devil.* Set no Eſteem on your own Judgment, Thoughts or Perſon. Mind that Saying of *Heſychius*,

How a Spiritual Perſon ought to value himſelf.

Climac.

that *Sin cannot enter the heart unleſs it firſt knock at the gate with ſome Illuſion of wicked Suggeſtions*, and ſuch are vain Thoughts, Fancies, and Opinions. The leſs you eſteem your ſelf, you ſhall be the fitter to eſteem *God*.

Letter XX.

1. *The Fruits and Advantages of declining our own Particular or Natural Lights, and of applying our ſelves to matters of Faith.* 2. *Three Rules of the greateſt Uſe to a Chriſtian and perfect Life.* 3. *The Mortification of the Underſtanding and its Rules.* 4. *The Mortification of our own Judgment and its Rules.*

Practice teacheth us the perfect Knowledge of the Virtues.

THIS is the Condition of Virtue, that he underſtands it more who reduceth it to Practice, than one who ſtudies it. I therefore make no doubt, if you practiſe theſe Rules which I have ſet you in my former Letters, but you may be able to underſtand conſiderably more than what I have given you in Writing. As alſo I queſtion not, but if you be careful in obſerving what you read in my Sheets, I need not inſiſt much

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on what remains to be ſaid of the other Faculties. If a Soul is watchful and active to fly (as *a Sparrow out of the ſnare of the Fowler*) from particular things; and fix upon the Univerſal and general Way of Virtue, and the Will of God, and reſolve, not to offend its Lord, but to Love him, let come what will, and let it loſe what it has to loſe; what harm can the Creatures, Devils and Paſſions do it? If a Soul will duly and ſeriouſly weigh with frequent, ſolid, and long Conſiderations, the moſt fooliſh Vanity and irrevocable Swiftneſs of temporal Things: and on the other ſide, if there paſs not ſo much as one Day in very many Years, wherein it does not ſpiritually reflect and meditate upon the Ages of Immortality, and the immoveable and endleſs Duration of Eternity; what can the Paſſions, the World, and Hell let-looſe, hurt it in the few flying Hours of this moſt ſhort Life? Moſt true it is that our Paſſions are moved by particular Objects! But theſe do no manner of way influence us, if they have not firſt poſſeſs'd themſelves of our Apprehenſion and Opinion. Whoſoever therefore has habituated himſelf to keep his Mind elevated in his beloved Jeſus Chriſt, and on the great Concern of Eternity, and

Pſal. 124.

The Benefit of forſaking particular Knowledge, and of embracing the Light of Faith.

has a deep Apprehenſion of this Point, of either being ſav'd or loſt to all Eternity; muſt infallibly and without all peradventure look upon all the World with Diſdain, and ſcorn its Inſtances: and all Earthly Matters that are not directed to the Glory of God and the Salvation of his immortal Soul, muſt only carry in his Eyes the Shew of Childiſh Toys, and Plays. Nor is this any airy Notion or Speculation of my Brain: but I, nay I my ſelf know very many Men on whoſe Hearts the Delights, Intereſts, or Honours of this Earth, or even publick Deriſion, or temporal Loſſes and Puniſhments could make no deeper Impreſſion, than a Seal of Wax could do upon a ſolid piece of Marble. Whoſoever is ſtrongly perſwaded of that Saying of the Wiſe Man, that the Creatures were laid for a Temptation to the Souls of Men, and for a Snare to catch the Feet of Fools. (which proceeds from their not walking in Faith as they ought to do) Whoſoever, I ſay, conſiders this Truth ſolidly, does never rely or put any Confidence in particular Creatures: nay hardly does he look back upon them ſo far as it is neceſſary; that he may fly up again into God. This, This is the way, but few walk in it: becauſe few will wean themſelves from that incon-

inconſiderable Goodneſs and Delightfulneſ that ſo many fancy they find in the Creatures. Thus we loſe immenſe Treaſures (for ſuch are indeed the higheſt Degrees of Grace and Heavenly Bliſs) becauſe we neglect the precious Moments of Time allotted us for our Improvement in Virtue, in the Love of God, and true Worth, but this we ſquander away, as the Prodigal of the Goſpel did his Father's Subſtance.

Three Universal Rules for the Furtherance of a Christian Life.

2. Eſtabliſh therefore this Rule in your Heart, *That we were not created for any Creature whatſoever, but for God: therefore we ought to Love no Creature unleſs with reſpect to God. And tho' our Lord God ſhould be pleaſed to deny us the Uſe of all the Creatures (whether it be internal or external) yet we ought not to be troubled at it, becauſe God is ſufficient for us both in Time and in Eternity.* Keep your Mind alſo poſſeſt with this other Truth: *That the Love of God, and the Purity of our own Conſcience, are two things of greater Value than that any thing created can come in competition with them: No Reaſon, no Accident, and no Creature ought to cauſe us to commit one conſiderate and voluntary Sin, tho' it be only a light one. Nay, we ought to enjoy Liberty of Spirit to that degree, that nothing ſhould amuſe or ſtop us from being employed*

employed in that Buſineſs which we clearly know will tend to the promoting of the Glory of our Saviour, and the Benefit of our Souls. And therefore let the third Rule be *To give every thing its due, if we would deſire to be Juſt. Let us love thoſe Virtues that are naturally good. And hate thoſe Vices that are naturally Evil. We ſhould neither love nor hate theſe things that in regard to us are neither Virtue nor Vice but indifferent: nor yet ſuffer our ſelves to be byaſs'd or determin'd by them. If they can help us towards Virtue, let us embrace them. If they lead us into any Vice let us eſchew them. If God beſtows them upon us, we are to love him in them. If he does not give them, or if he recalls them, we are to love God without them. And in ſhort, let us give to God and our Neighbbours, what he requires of us, and that is Love, even the Love of Charity.* If theſe general Rules enlighten your Soul, and if you order the Reſolutions of your Free Will by their Light; what pleaſant and excellent Rivers of Peace ſhall overflow the dark boſom of your Spirit! You may probably think that ſuperfluous which I am briefly to ſubjoin, that I may put a Cloſe to this Work which I have undertaken.

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3. The *Understanding*, a Spiritual Faculty not restricted to any corporeal Instrument, is the Eye of the Soul, whereby it knows Truths (not after a corporeal and particular Way, as it does by the External and Internal Senses, but after a Spiritual and general manner) and this also wants to be reform'd. But when the *Understanding* looks back upon the Senses, and sensible things, and Discourses and Reasons upon Objects and Truths of this World, it takes the Name of Inferior Reason, and of this I have written to you at large: and therefore will here add very little to that Purpose. You may then for the better Direction of your Understanding, take Notice of these Rules, which cannot miss of proving useful to your Salvation, as flowing from that excellent Fountain, *Jacob Alvarez*. 1. Because Ignorance, and that mainly of Heavenly Things, was entail'd upon the Understanding as a Punishment of Original Sin; it becomes you to use your utmost Diligence duly to learn and comprehend the things necessary to your immortal Salvation, and also to the Perfection of that State which you profess. O how many fall short of this Rule: neither will their culpable Ignorance justify them at the Tribunal of God. 2. Decline

Of the Mortification of the Understanding.

Rules for that End.

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to understand, or know these things that may prove hurtful or useless to your Soul: nor be sollicitous about much natural Knowledge, if you would wish God to inspire you with Divine Knowledge, which is Grace. For it requires the Soul to be empty and well dispos'd for its Il-

3. luminations. 3. Endeavour to comprehend these Truths that are of Use to you, with a right and pure Intention, that thereby you may know how to give greater Honour and Glory to God: and that you may illuminate your Neighbour also, when occasion offers. Be not amused by that Deviliſh Suggestion, which tells you, that the more you understand of divine things, the greater must your Account be for them, because it yields you no Benefit. Never strive to learn Virtues for the Pleasure of Knowing them only; but with an Intention of practising them. Besides, I am satisfied that one who knows much, can do much, but what can a Person do who knows nothing at all?

4. 4. Never teach that to others, which you are not fully Master of your self; nor pretend to know that, which really you are ignorant of. How many stretch their Understanding and set their Wit on edge, to speak things which they are Strangers to; that their Silence may not be thought

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to betray their Ignorance, this is not Humility but Pride and Ambition. We ſhould do better to confeſs ingenuouſly, that we know nothing of that, which we have not as yet come to know. 5. Strive to fore-ſee and project all your Actions and Words with your Underſtanding: and whatſoever you ſee to be Evil, decline that by all means. Whatſoever you ſhall ſee to be good; do it, and do it well. To act inconſiderately and without the Foreſight and Reflexion of the Underſtanding, will not acquit us but rather aggravate our Puniſhment. How many Miſchiefs, Scandals, and Faults proceed from ſuch acting or ſpeaking at random, and without due and previous Conſideration! *Whatſoever a Religious Man does or ſays without the Fore-caſt of Reaſon, is at leaſtcoſt an idle Word or Action*; was the Opinion of that illuminated blind Man the Venerable *John* of St. *Sampſon*. And it is well known that Chriſt warn'd us of the Obligation we lie under to give an Account of every idle Word. Which is a very conſiderable Point. 6. Beware of Judging the Life and Manners of thoſe that are not committed to your Care; but leave them to God and their Superiors. You have ſo much to Judge, condemn, and amend in your ſelf (if Self-Love has not dark'ned

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6.

dark'ned your Understanding) as will not allow you time to Judge others. How strange and unaccountable! That in Bodily Diseases one very small Imposthume of our own, grieves us more than a corroding Cancer of another Man: and in the Distempers of the Soul we regard more the small Sores of another than our
7. own great Cancers. 7. Use all your Diligence to employ your Understanding aright, by endeavouring to have it now and then enlighten'd with the Light of actual Faith, and its Mysteries, and above all with the incorporeal and unfigur'd Presence of God. As Love is the Perfection of our Will, so is Faith the Perfection of our Understanding. This Faculty is like a Looking-Glass: and if one could see it, when it is in the Act of Understanding, he should discern therein the Image of that Thing which it understands. My God! How much more beautiful and glorious is a Looking-Glass when it reflects the Image of the Sun, than if it did only reflect that of the Earth? But what Sun is like *God?* Why then do we not strive to keep *God*, and his Divine Humanity continually in our Understanding? What illustrious Beauty and Glory should it then partake of? O how low does so sublime a Faculty sink, when it turns towards the Earth?

4. But

4. But becauſe this Intellective Faculty does not only apprehend and know things, but alſo paſſes Judgment on them, and diſcerns what to hold, or act concerning Objects, I judge it proper to preſcribe you ſome Rules concerning the Judgment: becauſe it is alſo liable to many Errors, and our own Judgment is mightily condemn'd by Spiritual Maſters. 1. Never reckon any Doctrine to be true, whether it be your own or another Body's Opinion, if it be not univerſally receiv'd by the Church. And eſpecially in Spiritual Matters beware of Novelties, and of ſome Spiritual Singularity, of which we have ſeen too much in our Days. The Bleſs'd *Lawrence Juſtinian* was wont to ſay, *Non ſic Patres noſtri, non ſic. Our Fathers neither did, nor ſaid ſo.* 2. Have a great Eſteem for the Rules which you profeſs: and account them better than what, may appear more plauſible to you or others. If you hear any body condemn them, fly from him as a Dragon. 3. Reſpect the Conſtitutions that are made in your Religious Aſſemblies and ſubmit your ſelf to their Judgment. And if you ſhould have entertain'd the quite contrary Opinion before the Matter was agreed upon, immediately upon the Decree, ſurrender your Underſtanding to the Light which the Lord

Of the Mortification of our own Judgment.

Rule 1.

2.

3.

Lord has communicated to the greater
4. Party. 4. Never canvaſs or Judge the Inſtirutions of the Church, or of Biſhops, or of Lawful Superiors, but receive and
5. obey their Orders with Simplicity. 5. In Matters that concern your Life and Behaviour, endeavour never to rule your ſelf by your own Judgment or Appetites: but counſel and govern your ſelf by the good Advice and Opinion of others, and
6. eſpecially by that of your Superiors. 6. In external Actions and Affairs of any Moment, never deliberate any thing without ſome other Body's Counſel and Advice, but mind that Saying of the Wiſe
Eccleſ. 32. Man, *Son do nothing without Advice: and*
7. *you ſhall not repent it after the Action.* 7. Likewiſe in Matters of ſmall Moment endeavour as much as you can to ſubmit your ſelf rather to another Man's Judgment than to be rul'd by your own; when
8. no Damage enſues upon it. 8. Be not too much wedded to your own Opinion, nor anxious to draw others to it; nor be uneaſie if others judge differently from you: or tho' they even may contradict
9. your Opinion. 9. In fine, Be careful to renounce your own Judgment, and chiefly in Obedience becauſe there are many who are actually obedient, but wiſh inwardly that they did not obey. Others obey

both

both actually and willingly, but ſtill reſerving to themſelves the Privilege of Judging, reckoning that to be better which they think ſo, than what their Biſhop enjoyns them. Few arrive at the Simplicity of Little Children, who ſhould ſtill account that beſt which is impoſed on them by their Superiors, unleſs it were evidently ſinful, or a Tranſgreſſion of your Laws without a ſufficient Occaſion for diſpenſing with them. 10. And again I ſay, ſtrive to Mortifie your Underſtanding: becauſe it being (according to St. *Thomas*) the Nobleſt of all our Faculties: when you offer it to *God*, you preſent him with a moſt Noble Sacrifice, and then it is that you make it a Victim to God, when you mortifie it for his ſake. 10.

Letter XXI.

1. *The Mortifying of the Underſtanding in order to Prayer, and its Degrees.* 2. *Two kinds of Contemplation.* 3. *Praying with pure Faith is the myſtical State of a contemplative Soul.* 4. *A compendious Doctrine of the Paſſions.*

BUT the higheſt Pitch of *Mortification* that the Underſtanding

How Beginners ought to mortify their Understand in Prayer.

can undergo, is possibly when it suffers most, and dies in a mysterious Sense; and this will happen to you in Mental Prayer. Our Lord God ordinarily guides Beginners, not as yet wean'd from their Senses, nor from the exercising of their sensible Faculties, by the way of several internal Sweets and Pleasures, and devout Sensations. O how easy, luminous, and sweet, do their Meditations prove for some time in the Beginning! They apprehend, know, and find a delicious Relish in the Divine Mysteries, and are edified and refresh'd with ardent Affections of Love to *God:* and while they are enjoying so dear and holy Delicacies, they would willingly
Luke 9. make a Tabernacle and Dwelling-place in this *Tabor.* But if our Lord God is pleas'd to raise them to the most sublime Degrees of Prayer, he withdraws his lucid and sweet Communications from their low Faculties; and their Heart remains altogether dryed, and their Affections almost depriv'd of Devotion, their Fancy obscur'd, and made unfit for any farther Meditation. Then do their Sorrows and Troubles commence, and become much the more insupportable: if the dry and parched Soul finds not some learn'd and experienc'd Director. I mean not only learn'd and experienc'd in Scholastical bu

but alſo in Myſtical Sciences, whereby he may know that beſide the internal World of ſenſible and diſcurſive Knowledge, and of the Affections depending upon it, there is another World which is purely Spiritual and Profound, altogether unknown to the Senſes, and their Operations. But if the Soul by good Direction, (ſeeing clearly that it is not the Will of *God* that it ſhould reſt any longer in the low internal Senſes) ſubmits it ſelf to Grace, and begins to forſake ſenſible and diſcurſive Meditations, and to calm into a perfect Reſt and Tranquility of Mind, and entirely abandon it ſelf in its beloved *God*, by a ſimple Apprehenſion of an inward and deep Faith: and contents it ſelf to Believe and Love, and to depend on Divine Providence, by one direct Act of the Soul; than is it by little and little led into the moſt high Region of holy Contemplation.

What they muſt do in their firſt Aridities.

2. But becauſe Contemplation is of two kinds: One affirmative, which is luminous, and full of Spiritual Lights, where the Underſtanding meets with wonderful Entertainment, and by means of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, receives many Diſcoveries of the Attributes and Greatneſs of *God* to its exceeding Joy and Satisfaction: The other Negative, which is dark, tho'

Contemplative-Prayer.

tho' with a Darkneſs of that Nature, that is juſtly call'd by St. *Dionyſius*, moſt bright, and dazling, becauſe it is Light, which is, inacceſſible by reaſon of its exceſſive Brightneſs, and therefore ſeems Gloomy to the Underſtandings of Men; as the Sun appears dark to the weak Eyes of the Owl. Becauſe, I ſay, there is one Affirmative Contemplation, which underſtands much of *God*; and another Negative, which comprehends nothing of him, this being more ſublime than the firſt; therefore it follows, that the Underſtanding muſt mortify it ſelf, even by diſclaiming its Spiritual Knowledge of *God* himſelf. And I pray you, What can our Underſtanding truly know in this blind Life, being inclos'd, and pent up in the Senſes, which by their Fantaſms only, furniſh it with Knowledge after a bodily and groſs manner? What can it ever know of that ſupreme, uncreated, unlimited, incorporeal, unſpeakable, unconceivable and unintelligible Being? What the Underſtanding can here know, is not *God*. That moſt pure Eſſence is ſo ſtrictly One, ſimple, and indiviſible, that it is all underſtood or nothing at all; becauſe it hath no Parts. But the full and perfect Knowledge of it cannot be attain'd to, without the Light of Glory, and then the Soul ſhould be perfectly

perfectly happy: therefore the Divine Eſſence is not underſtood in this Life, by the mere Light of Grace and Faith. For in this Life, we only know *God* negatively, and not, what he really is. Therefore that which is here underſtoood, ſeen, and known by the Soul in our lower World, even by Contemplation, is not *God*. Therefore the Opinion of St. *Thomas* is true, that *We advance ſtill the nearer to the Knowledge of God, the more things we remove from him: becauſe the Immenſity of the divine Subſtance ſurpaſſes any Form that can be conceived by our Unding.* And St. *Nilus* had ſaid before him. *If thou deſireſt to pray, forſake all things, that thou mayſt be poſſeſt of him who is All.* And the Divine *Areopagita* had taught it before them both, in his *Myſtical Theology.*

3. This Mortification of the Underſtanding, which conſiſts in a ſtate of naked, ſimple, and reſign'd Faith, O ſtrange, how hard is it to be digeſted by this Faculty, of which the Philoſopher ſaid, that *It naturally deſires to know!* It ſeems to Senſe that this Method of Praying, by Loving God, without underſtanding him; is to loſe our Time. And this Emptineſs, and Darkneſs of Faith, O how hard and painful does it prove to the Underſtanding

it ſelf! But it is yet much more painful, when it is paſſive, and proceeds from Grace, which purifies its Spiritual Faculties, placing them in Darkneſs, Hunger, and afflicting Emptineſs with moſt exquiſite and inexpreſſible Torments, of which *John a Cruce* ſpeaks moſt divinely, to whom I remit you. Be you in the mean while buſied in diſpoſing your ſelf, and in making way for the Operations of the Grace of *God* in you: and in mortifying your Underſtanding ſtill more and more; and taking it off from wandring, from Reaſonings, and from the Deſire of Illuminations, and Knowledge: becauſe what you could know, would not be your moſt High *God*, the only Object of your enamour'd Heart. Mind always that which I wrote to you in one of my *Letters*, that *He unites himſelf beſt to God in this Life, who does it, as to a thing altogether unknown.* Remember that we honour *God* more by believing in him, and Loving him without knowing him, than if we ſhould have a Deſire of Viſions, which are not to be long'd for in this World. Let us be contented with the Beatifical and Eternal Viſion, which we hope for in Heaven: and let us think thoſe *happy and bleſſed who have not ſeen, and yet have believed*, as our Saviour told the Apoſtle

Dark Night, B. 2.

S. Dion. ch. 1. Myſt. Theol.

Joh. 20. 29.

Apoſtle St. *Thomas.* Beſides, the Soul by theſe ways of renouncing its Underſtanding, and affirmative Conceptions in Prayer, comes (by the Help of Grace) to a wonderful Purity: and the Lord aſſures it with a ſedate and deep Peace, and with ſo clear a Certainty of his Divine Preſence, as ſurpaſſeth all humane Evidence. Whilſt a Soul remains in this Inward State of actual Contemplation, it lives wonderfully ſecure, and ſees it ſelf, it knows not how, ſeated in its *God*, its beloved and chiefeſt Good. It neither knows *God*, nor the chiefeſt Good, nor yet any other Conception, or Word whatſoever; but it ſtands abſorpt and loſt in ſomething, I know not what, which is none of theſe things, which we can expreſs. The Soul hath found all things without finding any thing. It ſees nothing clearly, taſts nothing, and touches nothing: and truly in this great Emptineſs it is in, it taſteth without having any Reliſh of the divine Fulneſs, which entirely fills it, and which makes it ſwim and loſe it ſelf in a Sea of Light, that is, no Light to it, but a moſt bright and dazling Darkneſs, that cannot be ſeen by reaſon of its exceſſive Splendor and Luſtre, ſurpaſſing and tranſcending the weak Sight of its Underſtanding, and that infinitely. The Soul remains quite

A Deſcription of the Myſtick State, at which the Soul arrives, by the help of Grace, and by the means of evacuating the Soul, and by Negative Contemplation.

forgetful of it ſelf, and of every created thing, and is plac'd in an Abyſs, which is no Abyſs; nor can any Name be given it, becauſe it has no Name. And as no limited, diſtinct or particular Notion can be form'd of that immenſe Being: no more can that unknown Good which the Soul feels be deſcrib'd: nor can there be Words found or invented to expreſs it. I wiſh Chriſt may exalt you to this State: and then, and not till then, ſhall you underſtand this which I have briefly deſcrib'd in theſe few Lines.

4. And here ends the Treatiſe concerning the Mortification of our Apprehenſive Faculties, that is, of the Internal Senſes, and the Underſtanding. It remains to treat of our Deſiring Faculties, that is, of our Paſſions and Will. As to what concerns Theſe, I am of Opinion, that I have ſufficiently diſcourſed of them in a particular Treatiſe concerning the Faculties. I ſhall here content my ſelf to advertiſe you, that it is neceſſary to be very vigilant about the Mortification of the two firſt Paſſions, which are the Roots of the reſt, namely, *Love* and *Hatred*. Whoever overcomes theſe, overcomes them all. He that loves not the Creatures, nor even himſelf, or what belongs

to him, unleſs in *God*, and in reference to him, will not certainly *deſire* them, nor will he *make bold Attempts* to obtain them, neither *Hope for* them, nor *Rejoice* when he has obtain'd them, nor is he *griev'd* when he has loſt them, nor *deſpairs* of compaſſing them, nor is he *Angry* when they turn not to good Account. And in the ſame manner, he who hates no Evil (excepting Sin, and whatſoever leads to Vice) does not inordinately abhor the Creatures, nor yet unreaſonably fears them, nor is he afflicted or angry with theſe Earthly and Temporal Accidents. I will ſpeak briefly to the *Will* in the enſuing *Letters*.

A ſhort Diſcourſe for the mortifying of the Paſſions.

LETTER XXII.

1. *Love corrects and reforms the Will. How a Soul ſhould prepare it ſelf to obtain it.* 2. *Of Good and Vicious Self-Love, what they are.* 3. 4. 5. & 6. *Twenty Rules for the Mortification of Self-Love.*

1. THE Angels did ſing at the Birth of our Saviour, *In terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis.* This is the End and Summ of all I have hitherto ſaid or can

The Neceſſity of Good Will, that is not found without Charity.

can ſay, *Be a Perſon of Good Will.* Nor let Moral Goodneſs, which draws its Original from Juſtice, content you; but aſpire after a ſupernatural Goodneſs, that takes its Riſe from Love, the true Life of all other Virtues, without which every Action, ſeemingly virtuous, is no lively Virtue, but a ſpecious Carcaſs, uſeleſs for the Attainment of immortal Bliſs. You already know, that this divine *Love is* Rom. 5. 5. *ſhed abroad in our hearts* by the moſt High *God*, and that its Fire, is a Heavenly and not Earthly Fire: In vain then ſhould a Soul ſtrive to kindle ſo much as one Spark of the Love of *God* in it ſelf, by its own peculiar natural Strength. You are likewiſe convinc'd that it is *Man's Duty to prepare his Soul:* and that the firſt Preparation is to remove all thoſe Impediments, that may ſtand in oppoſition to this divine Flame of Love, that muſt reform our *Will.* As he ſhould loſe his Labour, who would ſet a piece of Wood on fire, which has ſoak'd in Water; until he firſt dry it: ſo is it as much loſt Labour for ſome Souls to reſolve on the kindling the Love of *God* in their Hearts, unleſs they firſt do their utmoſt Endeavour to remove theſe Impediments, which obſtruct the Heavenly Flame.

2. It

2. It is certain, that every Sin, and every voluntary Diſorder of our Faculties, is repugnant to Charity, which is true eſſential Sanctity and Righteouſneſs. One who could put my Advices in Execution, might be very thankful to *God*, and entertain good Hope of being made capable of this Divine Fire. Nevertheleſs it remains here, for the greater Satisfaction of thoſe that are leſs intelligent, that I diſcourſe of two things directly oppoſite to Charity, and they are theſe, *Vicious Self-Love, and our own Will.* I call that *Vicious Self-Love*, wherewith a Man loves himſelf, by wiſhing his own Good, and making himſelf in ſome meaſure, the Mark and End of his own Love: and conſequently of his Deſires, Thoughts, Labour, Sufferings, and of all other his Actions. To love ones Self with regard to *God*, and therefore to advance in Virtue, and to improve and increaſe in Charity and Chriſtian Perfection, and aſpire to the high Degrees of Eternal Glory, by relying on the Grace of *God* purchas'd by the Eternal Word, made Man for our ſake, and wiſhing that we may glorify and love our chiefeſt and infinite Good more compleatly, in a ſtate of moſt eminent Perfection, and ſublime Bleſſedneſs; ſuch a Love towards our ſelves

Of good Self-Love.

ſelves is moſt holy and true Charity. And would to *God* the World were full of it! But vicious *Self-Love* is the Root of all Vices, and of the Damnation of Mankind, and may be thus defin'd. *It is an Affection of the reaſonable Creature, whereby it deſires its own good, and avoids Evils out of Love to it ſelf, or ſtops in it ſelf, as its End.* In this lies the Ill of *Self-Love*; that one who has a tender Regard for himſelf, ſets himſelf up for his own End: which is contrary to *God*, who is the *Beginning and End* of all things, and *who has created all things for himſelf* and his own Glory. Neither are there many Souls that attend a Spiritual Life, exempted from the Infection of this Love, becauſe its dangerous Poiſon ſtrives to incorporate with every thing. O how often does the Soul ſeek after a God that may pleaſe it! How often does it decline thoſe Virtues that diſpleaſe it! Here lies all the Contagion of *Self-Love*; *To wiſh for whatſoever does pleaſe, and ſhun whatever diſpleaſes:* and this I underſtand both of Corporeal and Spiritual Things, becauſe there is a Carnal as well as a Spiritual *Self-Love*.

Of falſe Self-Love.

Rev. 1.

Prov. 16.

Rules for the Mortification of Self-Love.

3. But becauſe I intend Brevity, I will ſet you in few Words, ſome Rules for the mortifying of this Love which poiſons Charity;

Charity: and you will find them very weighty and practicable. 1. In the First Place lay down this Evangelical Maxim, *Whoſoever will Love his Soul, with a temporal and inordinate Love, ſhall loſe it. And whoſoever hateth his own Soul in this world, (by withdrawing himſelf from worldly pleaſures, and his Senſes, and by mortifying himſelf daily) for eternal Life ſhall ſave it.* Retain always this Rule freſh in your Memory, becauſe it is not barely a Foundation for the reſt, but alſo is alone ſufficient to lead you to the height of Perfection. 2. Mind likewiſe, that ſeeing *Self-Love* is ſo rooted in our corrupt Nature, and that *none ever hateth his own flesh*, that nothing but Grace can work you up to this holy Diſlike of your ſelf: nor is there any ſurer way to obtain Grace than by being Humble, which inclines you to be diſtruſtful of your own Strength; and confident Prayer, whereby you may obtain the Help of *God* who is Omnipotent. Pray therefore with great Aſſiduity and Fervency to overcome *Self-Love*, and to gain the Love of *God*: which will proportionably pierce into your Soul, as you rid your ſelf of *Self-Love*. 3. Whilſt you Pray, conſider deeply the Shortneſs and Vanity of Earthly Things, and of this Mortal Life, and what

1.

John 12.

2.

Eph. 5. 29.

Prayer.

3

what ſhall become of your Body: and weigh ſeriouſly the Greatneſs, Sufficiency, and Lovelineſs of *God* and of eternal Goods, that you may bring the Prejudices of your Underſtanding to a clearer Light, and extinguiſh in your *Will* all the Affections to periſhing and frail Goods, by kindling therein a Love to true and im-

4. mortal Enjoyments. 4. Labour with all diligent Care to rectify and purify your Intention in each particular, nay even in the meaneſt Matters; obſerving narrowly, if, in what you act, or omit, neglect, do, or ſuffer; if, I ſay, your Drift be to ſeek your own Convenience, Profit, or Reputation; and if you be in the wrong, reſolve ſpeedily to amend it. Rectify therefore the Intention of your *Will*, by ordering all your Soul, and all your Actions that are not ſinful, even your natural Acts and Deeds to the fulfilling of the Will of God, and to give greater Glory to Him. This is a very weighty Point, and the Neglect of it is the deplorable Cauſe that there are ſo few Souls truly perfect.

5. *Humility.* 4. 5. Bring your ſelf to a Cuſtom of keeping your Mind below every Body, ſhun like Hell to prefer your ſelf proudly to any Perſon; and never pretend to any Merit, Endowments, or

ſingular

ſingular Talents of your own: neither preſume at any time to ſlight, deſpiſe, ſcorn, condemn, or in any Meaſure to offend any Neighbour. 6. Never deſire to court the Affection, Fear or ſingular Reverence of others: unleſs this be evidently neceſſary for the Glory of *God*, and Benefit of theſe Souls with whom you have to do. *Love* (ſays S. *Bonaventure*) *not to be known, and to be reputed a man of no worth.* 7. If you be truly humble, look upon your ſelf as worthy of Confuſion and Contempt, and when you have Occaſion to ſuffer them, do not avoid them. 8. Reſolve never to juſtify your ſelf; tho' you be even accus'd unjuſtly: providing no Scandal follow thereupon, or if Duty and Obedience oblige you not to anſwer. This is a fit Weapon (and very much recommended by S. *Tereſa*) to wound *Self-Love* with, that is full of Wit and Zeal to excuſe it ſelf, and to claim and vindicate its own right. 9. Suffer your natural Failings not only patiently but willingly; if they be not ſinful; neither be aſham'd to own them openly.

6. *A Diſengagement from Affections.*

7. *Patience.*

8. *To uſe no Excuſe.*

9. *Mortification.*

5. 10. Sometimes to humble you, diſcover theſe your own Faults, which give no Occaſion of Scandal to your Hearers. 11. Let not the Deſire of pleaſing

10.

11.

pleasing Men perplex you, nor the Fear of displeasing them trouble you: but having your inward Eye fixed upon the most high Will and Pleasure of *God*, let not the Reflexions upon what Men may judge or say of you, touch your Mind.

12. *Austerity.* 12. Chastise your Body, put a Restraint upon your Senses, and forcibly subdue your Passions. 13. Triumph over all Affections that tend to your own Honour,

13. *Mortification of Natural Affections.* to a higher step of Dignity, to things which you use, to your Friends and Relations, and to any Creature whatsoever which is not expresly lov'd by you in God and for God. 14. Tie your self

14. *And of Spitual Things.* never too much up to Business, tho' it be pious, devout and holy, nor to any kind of Spiritual Exercise, so as to forego your Spiritual Liberty. But you ought to live so resign'd and denied, as to be ready to change or quite break off these Occupations at the Command of Obedience, or upon any other Dispensation of the Divine Will. 15. Put not

15. *Obedience.* too great a Confidence in Actions, tho' they be good, to which you see your self drawn by your Natural Inclination, and which you take Pleasure to Do without the Prescription of Obedience; whilst you perceive your self to be lazy and untoward in performing what your

Rules

Rules or Superiors oblige you to do, which are more acceptable to *God*, and turn to your own, and others greater Profit and Advantage. *Whatsoever we apply our selves to upon the Account of our own Satisfaction, or by our own proper Motion* (said a Holy Man) *comes rather from our own natural Instinct than from the Grace of God. The Contrary must be said of Mortification, provided the Desire of mortifying our selves be not very uneasy and too full of Anxiety.* 16. Strive to overcome, and chase away all Sadness, and Sorrow, all Envy, Impatience, Jealousie; Rancour and scrupulous Humour which are Plagues issuing from Crafty *Self-Love.* 17. Resolve likewise in Adversity not to give it so much way as to oppress you, and never lose the calm and sedate Temper, and Peace of your Mind, and your Confidence, and repose in the Bosom of Providence, Charity and the Will of God.

Jo. Sampſ.

16. *Victory.*

17.

6. 18. It being certain that *that* thing is not loved, which is not esteem'd good and pleasant, endeavour therefore really and cordially to think that you stand guilty before an offended Creator, and that you are a Sink and Common-shore of Wickedness: because you see clearly, that you are apt to fall into any Sin,

18. *A mean Opinion of our selves.*

and to fully every good Thing; and consequently you must resolve to be displeas'd with your self. This is the Root of all our Goodness: *These who are not dissatisfied with themselves* (as a very deep Contemplator assures us) *and yet willingly undertake the Care of others, are unqualified and incapable of any kind of Virtue, and are involv'd in, and labour under several Troubles and Afflictions. But were they dead to themselves, they would not be disquieted. They complain of others, but if they took good heed to themselves; they would be quiet, and take things patiently, by living to themselves and to God. These who are displeas'd with themselves, and accuse their own Faults, and blame themselves, shall be blessed of God.* 19. Nor will I defraud this Discourse of the most true Sayings of *Joannes a Cruce*, which I can never cease to repeat *If any one* (says he) *should endeavour to perswade you of any loose Doctrine, believe him not, tho' he seem'd to confirm it with Miracles: but be rather advis'd by those who enjoyn and teach you Austerity, Penitence, and to divest you of every thing.* Remark another Expression of his, *Consider, that thou hast great need to countermand thy self, and to walk to Perfection by the way of an austere Life.* This has been the Doctrine and

Practice

Rusbroch. *True Contempl.* ch. 78.

19.

To eschew Licentiousness.

Practice of all the Saints. We both read and celebrate their Lives: but *Self-Love* misleads us too much, which only intends to carve out broad, easy and pleasant ways to Paradise: tho' our Wise Redeemer taught no other Path to Heaven but what was narrow, and full of Self-denial, Crosses, and Love too, tho' not of *Self-Love*. 20. And to summ up the whole Matter in few Words. Whosoever loveth himself, seeketh himself; and whosoever loveth *God* seeketh *God*. One who is too tender of himself, will have all things, nay, *God* himself to be subservient to his Purposes. He who loves *God*, makes himself and all things subservient to *God*. *Self-Love* pursues that which is agreeable to it, and refuses what it finds to be unpleasant and unpalatable, either in those Actions subjected to it, or in the Creatures. And the Love of *God* seeketh whatsoever is well-pleasing to *God*, and shuns whatsoever stands in Opposition to his Will, whether in its peculiar Operations, or in the Creatures. Dear Soul, these are not things to be read cursorily: nor is it enough to understand, and confess them, if they be not digested into Practice.

20. *An Abridgment of all these Rules.*

LETTER XXIII.

1. *The Miſchiefs that ſpring from our own Will.* 2. & 3. *Three Degrees of denying of our Selves taken from the Prayer of our Saviour in the Garden.* 4. & 5. *Seven Rules for the denying of our own Will.* 6. & 7. *The Efficacy and Liberty of our Will in producing the Acts of Volition: and the Inexcuſableneſs of thoſe who will not ſet their Affections upon Good, but Evil.* 8. *The Source of Faults, and of Indifferency.* 9. *The Hope of God's Aſſiſtance to that Will which intends virtuous Actions.* 10. *How to apply Free-Will to the moſt difficult Acts of Virtue.*

Great Evils iſſuing from Self-Will.

Lauren. Juſtinian. *Diſcipl. Mon.* ch. 7.

Self-Will is that which is ſo much ours, that it is abſolutely peculiar to us, and has no Affinity or Fellowſhip with the Will of *God:* but *is ſtill at variance and Enmity with Him. From it have Ambition, and Apoſtacy from God taken their riſe.* The Will of the Creature is not only diſtinguiſh'd from the Will of *God;* but very often contrary to it: and is the Original and Ground of all our Pride, of our keeping at ſuch a diſtance from the chief Good and from Virtue, and is the

the Author and Cauſe of all our Sins. This is ſo deadly a Poiſon, that there is nothing more requiſite than to diſſipate deſtroy and annihilate it: and therefore That is recommended as an excellent Prayer which was thrice repeated in the Garden by our Saviour, becauſe it wholly tended to the annulling and depreſſing of the Humane Will, and the exalting of the moſt amiable Will of God.

Chriſt's Prayer in the Garden Examined.

2. In this Heavenly Prayer of our Saviour, we will take notice of the three Ways of Speaking, copied by the three Evangeliſts. St. *Luke* has it, *Father not my Will, but thine be done.* Luke 22. In St. *Mark* it runs thus, *Not what I will, but what thou wilt.* Mark 14. And in St. *Matthew, Not as I will, but as thou wilt.* Matth. 26. Methinks I diſcern here the three Degrees that ought not to be omitted in the renouncing our own Will, that we may conform our ſelves to the Will of God. The Firſt conſiſts in a general Purpoſe and Reſolution, not to give way to our own Will, but to do the Will of *God.* It is not indeed a very hard Task to come up to this ſo general Act of Reſignation: becauſe it being produc'd by the Spiritual Faculties only (which ſolely conceive things in general) and ſeeing the Corporeal Faculties find not ſuch hard Labour in theſe general and

Three Degrees of the Denial of our own Will.

1.

abſtracted Acts, as what ordinarily attends particular Operations; in ſuch a Caſe 'tis eaſy to ſay, *Lord, not my Will, but thine be done.* Let us never forget that moſt true Doctrine of St. *Thomas*, namely, that a Will which can produce an Action, and does it not, is no real or effectual Will. Let us not then content our ſelves to have our Hearts poſſeſs'd with Spiritual and general Acts of denying our own Will, and Loving the Will of *God:* but let us paſs from Speculation to Practice, and from Generals to Particulars, whereby, when we ſhall have the Occaſion, we may conform our Actions to that general Exhibition and Reſignation that we have made to the Lord, of renouncing our own Will that his may be done.

2. 3. And this ſeems to be meant by that Saying, *Father, not what I will, but what thou wilt, be done.* So we paſs from a general Will to a diſtinct and particular Action, namely, not to will that which we have a mind to; but the good Pleaſure of our *God:* and that in each diſtinct and particular Action in which we diſcern

3. the Will of *God.* We wiſh many things becauſe they are the Will of *God;* but we wiſh them only as to the Subſtance, and not as to the Form or Circumſtance.

Some

Some would ſuffer for the Love of *God*; but he would not wiſh to do it in publick: or in ſuch a Place or Time, or by ſuch Men, or in the Preſence of ſome particular Perſons. They conſent to the wiſe Determination and Diſpoſal of *God*, but not to the Method and Way that he takes to diſpoſe of them by his Divine Providence: and therefore our Saviour ſaid, *Father not as I will but as thou wilt.* Here it is that we ought, in ſpight of our ſelves, to be forward for the Exerciſe of this wholſom and ſound Denial of our own Will, and the being united to the Will of *God* in every Degree and with all Perfection. This is the Eſſence of Chriſtian Holineſs. We are ſo much the more imperfect, the more we have of *Self-Will*; and the more do we grow in Perfection, the more that our own Will decreaſes, and the Impletion of the Will of *God*, is increas'd and promoted. Heaven is nothing, beſides a perfect and total Excluſion of all Property of the Creature, and a full and compleat Empire and Triumph of the Will of the Creator. Let us therefore lay to heart that it ought to be our continual Exerciſe to deny our ſelves, and fulfil the Will of *God* without the Exception of Places, Times, Circumſtances, or any other thing which we can imagine.

The First Rule for renouncing our own Will.

4. So much in general, let us now descend to the particular and distinct Rules. 1. Consider that your own Will is so pernicious, that it is not only apt to pervert you to chuse Sin, but even to corrupt and defile your good Actions. *The Wicked commit Sin even when they meddle with Justice, and dip in good works* (says St. Dorotheus). *When we embrace our own Will, or cherish and indulge it, even then it is that we lay snares for our selves in doing good, neither are we aware of our Damage or Ruin. Our own Will is an Iron Wall, that separates the Soul from God. It is a Rock which stands in opposition to, and clashes with the Will of God, which resists it. If righteous Actions contribute to the fomenting of our Self-Will, then our Concurrence marrs their Goodness.* Beware even to do good, merely upon the Account that it is your Will to do it as of your Self, and because it is convenient, honourable, profitable, or delightful to you: but do what is good in a right and due manner, because the Chief Good will have it so, and because it is for his Glory.

Serm. 5.

2. Be careful to moderate the Affections of your Will, that you may never be too inordinately and stiffly glued to any thing that bears the Appearance of good: but be ready to embrace or forsake whatsoever

ſoever *God* pleaſes, and theſe Superiors who govern you as his Vice-gerents.

3. Love the meaner good things leſs, and the greater more, and account Virtue your greateſt Riches and Felicity: and love it toward the obtaining of a pure Heart and a perfect Union with *God*. Love *God* above all things, and in ſuch a manner as not to love any thing that is not referred to him and his Glory: and which you may not ceaſe to love as ſoon as you know it to be the Will of *God* ſo to do. 4. Hence it ſhall come to paſs that you will be ready without Sorrow, murmuring, complaining, or dull Delays, to break off even your good Actions at the Command of the Divine Providence, and of the Obedience which you owe your Superiors.

3.

4.

V. 5. If you find that any thing or Action may prove uſeful or beneficial to you; be not ſuddenly led away by that created Good, or by your own private, tho' Spiritual Intereſt: but look (as far as the Obſcurity of *unevident Faith* will allow) if ſuch a thing may be acceptable and well-pleaſing to *God*: and in ſuch a Caſe ſet about it, and uſe your Endeavours to obtain and accompliſh it. To the End that our Actions may become worthy of a ſupernatural Reward; let us ſtrive to perform

Rule 5th.

perform them ſo uprightly, that by Grace, they may have ſomething that is ſupernatural in them. Our Will is a natural Cauſe: let us therefore in our Actions ſeek to transfer it to the Will of *God*: And do what is good, not becauſe we have a Mind to it of our ſelves, but in Conſideration, that our moſt high *God* requires it at our hands. 6. Chuſe always rather to obey than command, and to live under the Government of another, than under your own Conduct, unleſs the Divine Providence has ordered it to be otherwiſe. Hold it to be a great Misfortune, and a very dangerous and fearful State, if you ſhould be left to your own Government, and to live after your own Faſhion, and according to your own Will; and value it as one of God's beſt Bleſſings to be directed and guided by others. Peace of Conſcience, which is ſo valuable a thing, is never found to be ſo calm and ſecure as in Obedience. *To the obedient* (ſaith *Carthuſianus*) *God giveth comfort of heart, tranquility of mind, ſerenity of Conſcience, and an abundant growth and advancement in every Grace and Virtue.* And before him, S. *Dorotheus* gave this Account of himſelf. *It is owing to Obedience, that I have continually lived in ſuch quiet, ſo that I have been ſometimes jealous of ſo great Tranquility.*

6.

Carthuſ. *Profeſſ. Monaſt.*

Serm. 5.

lity. But I reſolv'd to open my Mind to you, Dear Brethren, out of a Deſire to ſhow you what firm Aſſuredneſs, how great Quiet, and Peace is found in not taking upon us the Management our of ſelves, but committing it to God, and to thoſe who are able under God to govern us. Learn what a Happineſs it is not to be guided by our own Fancy, nay ſurely it is true Humility, Quiet and Joy.

7. And when you come to ask any Favour of God in Prayer, reſolve to order your Intention in ſuch a manner, as not to deſire to be heard upon the Account of the Advantage and Benefit that might redound to you by the obtaining of your Deſire, but let God be your End: and out of Love to him, ſeek what may tend to his greater Glory, and ſubmit always your Deſires and Affections to his Good-Will and Pleaſure. 7.

Of the Activity of the Will in its Acts of Volition, and how it can move it ſelf.

6. And I judge it meet here to ſet forth to you the Force of our Will, a Faculty ſo prevalent, that our external Members, and our internal Senſes, and the Acts of our Underſtanding, do not only obey and ſtoop to it, but it can alſo command and move it ſelf. Hence it comes to paſs, that if you aim at any thing with a lively Reſolution, and chance to meet with diſcouraging Rubs and Obſtacles in your way to it, that terrifie you, ſo as to ſtifle and

and cool your Will from purſuing the Attainment of your Deſign, which otherwiſe you deſire; you can (by ſtirring up in you the Love of the End) move the Acts of your Will at ſuch a rate, as, in ſpite of natural Oppoſition, to undertake theſe Means, that ſeem'd at firſt ſight to be laborious and difficult. Here lies the great Secret and Myſtery of a devout Life. Scarce is there any ſick Man, who has not ſome natural Reluctancy at certain Medicinal Potions, or other Applications for the Recovery of his Health. But if this be deſired with ſo great Force and Earneſtneſs of Free-Will, as that the Love he bears to his Health turns the Scale upon the Horrour and Averſion ariſing from the difficult Means of his Cure; in ſuch a Caſe he undertakes all ſorts of Expedients for his Recovery. In like manner we muſt make it our Study, by the Help of God, effectually to enflame our Wills with our ultimate End, which is *God* and Eternal Happineſs: that ſo there may be no Difficulty, Care or Labour to be met with in the Uſe of Means toward our Health, but what we may overcome.

7. Now the Evil and Miſchief of our Will conſiſts in this, That it knows not its own Power, and does not make Uſe of

of it. It can will and desire whatsoever it pleases, and it can entertain an Aversion at, or decline whatsoever it has no Mind for, in spite of the whole World, and of all the other Faculties in Man. Strange! What is more contrary to Nature than a violent Death! And yet the Will of Man can chuse it, as is clearly seen in so many, who voluntarily kill themselves. What Creature is there more opposite to a Christian than the Devil? And what thing is more horrible than Hell? And yet the Will can freely chuse to submit to this cursed Wretch, and be content to go to Hell with him, which is the Case of Witches, who make themselves over to the Devil with their own Blood. Now I say, *What plausible Excuse can we bring before the Omnipotent Judge; when it shall be seen that we would not be Holy, because the Path to Perfection was too difficult and rugged for Sense to trade in?* We can desire or chuse not to comply with any Temptation whatsoever, or any Occasion of Sin: there can therefore be no lawful Excuse for one who hath offended his *God*. We can Desire every true Virtue (with the Grace of God *which is never wanting on its Part*) and we have it in our Power to chuse higher Degrees of Virtue, and are able to

The mighty Power of Free-Will.

The Inexcusableness of a Sinner.

to out-brave all the Threatnings of Men, all worldly Shame, all Losses of Interest, all Bodily Diseases, and Death it self that we may attain to the Exercise of the highest Virtues, and the perfect Imitation of Our Lord Jesus. Therefore all the Good that we have not been willing to do, is our inexcusable Fault.

From whence the Sins and Indifference of Mankind proceed.

8. The Source and Spring of all our Evils is that we do not eagerly quicken and awaken in us the Esteem and immense Conceit of an incomprehensible and high *God*, of the eternal and unspeakable Glory of Heaven, of the admirably Beauty of Grace, and Virtue, and how precious a Soul is to God: and have not a due Sense of the inestimable Deformity of Sin, and Hell. From this Defect of our Apprehension and Judgment springs the Backwardness and Indifferency of our Will. The Will when it pursues and intends its ultimate End coldly and unconcernedly, and the Virtues that carry Men to it, is alarm'd and damp'd with every emergent Sorrow or Affliction, and begins to call that impossible which is only difficult. And thus desires to be excus'd and dispens'd with (tho' unreasonably) and grows remiss, and goeth out of the *straight way* to Heaven, and walketh *in the wide and broad way that leadeth to destruction.* And

Matth. 7.

what

what is the Reaſon of this? Becauſe it has no Mind to embrace that good which it is able to chuſe, and has a Mind to *will* theſe pleaſant Vices which are in its Power, to abhor, and reject. Bleſſed is the Man who underſtands, weighs, and practiſes, theſe Truths! but none will take this Courſe, who does not reſolve to comply with ſuffering. I would wiſh to repeat a thouſand times over, a more than golden Sentence of St. *Gregory*, and I wiſh you could remember it a Million of times. *Many Men*, (ſays the Saint) *in their Deliberations and Reſolutions do deſire thoſe things that are upright*, (here lies the good ſpeculative Act) *but then they continually return to their cuſtomary Evils* (here lies the bad practical Will.) *They certainly wiſh to be humble, but nevertheleſs without ever ſuffering any Contempt: to be content with their Eſtate; but without ſtanding the Teſt of Neceſſity and Want: to be chaſt, but without Maceration of their Body: they will be patient but without ſuffering Injuries: and when they purſue the Attainment of Virtue, they ſhun the Hardſhips that attend it.* O Humane Will who canſt do as much as thou haſt a Mind for; becauſe Power and Willingneſs are one and the ſame thing in thee; alas, why wilt thou not reſolve upon't never

to affect any Vice, but rather ſtill to deſire all kind of Virtues? Nor to have your Will run out after your Self, but continually after God, and what is well-pleaſing to him.

God will aſſiſt thoſe who incline to act virtuous.

9. Beſides, *God* being the firſt Spring and Mover, no Motion, whether it be natural or ſupernatural can be imagin'd, which does not own God as its firſt Cauſe. I am certainly convinc'd that *God*, who is perfect Holineſs, bears no Part in Sin, ſo far as it is Sin: but natural Motions, as ſuch cannot *Be* without *God*. If therefore the firſt Mover be pleaſed to aſſiſt ſo many Motions of different Wills, which are but mean, and ſimply natural; how much more will he attend and aſſiſt virtuous and ſupernatural Motions ariſing from Grace and Theological Virtues: and which are appointed for the real good of a Soul that is the Spouſe of *God*, and for the Glory and Satisfaction of the ſame firſt Mover? The *Indian* Women can voluntarily throw themſelves into the flaming Pile to be burnt alive with their Husbands Corps; and cannot the Will of a Chriſtian throw it ſelf into the Divine Flames of Charity, to Love and ſuffer for its well-beloved *God?* Our Wills can freely move and determine themſelves to all ſort of moſt execrable Vices,

and

and why not to the most sublime Virtues also? To whom can we impute this? Not to *God; For this is the Will of God even your Sanctification.* The Defect must therefore be charg'd on us; and the Reason is plain and evident: Because we do not so effectually warm our Wills with the Love of virtuous Designs, as that the actual Love of the End may make us overcome all the Difficulties we can meet with in the Means that we use to obtain it. 1 Thess. 4.

10. Take therefore this Practical Rule for making good Use of your most free and invincible Will. When you know a Virtue of an heroical and excellent Nature, but yet difficult, in the first place invoke the Divine Aid and Assistance, and then set your Heart upon the End, namely, the Glory and Will of a most lovely *God*, the Eternity of Happiness, which will be the Return and Wages of this Virtuous Action, the Beauty of Virtue in it self; and the Lustre it communicates to our Soul by the Practice of it: and make it your studied Care to kindle in your Free-Will a lively and powerful Love to ward this Virtuous Action, so as the Fear of Difficulties in the Means may be overcome and suppress'd, by reason of the excessive Love that you bear to the virtuous

Rule 8th. To use our Free-Will, to chuse the most difficult Acts of Virtue.

Design. Consider how much more Men bear and suffer for the vilest and basest Attainments. Consider, that they can even *will* and desire Death, nay the hardest of Deaths to be burnt alive: now how much more can you wish for Virtue that is much less difficult, and that leads you to a happy Life?

LETTER XXIV.

Of the Love of GOD.

1. *One who mortifieth himself as he ought, attaineth unto true Charity.* 2. *What this Virtue is, and a Description of pure Charity.* 3. 4. *How to be inflam'd with divine Love.* 5. *Exercise of Ejaculatory Prayer.* 6. *Three Motives to grow in Charity.* 7. *Acts of Love toward God.*

1. IT were now requisite that (to make good what I promised in the Beginning of this Treatise, after I had discoursed of *Faith* and *Mortification* as well external as internal) I should treat of *Charity*, the Queen and Life of all Virtues, and *the Bond of Perfection*: but who can in few Words describe, that Virtue that shall last to all Eternity? If I should handle

Col. 3.

handle it in a ſpeculative Form, I am not ſure, if it could be of Uſe to you: nor yet would the Shortneſs of my time allow me. Yet I will aſſure you, that if you would faithfully perform what I have written to you in ſo many Sheets: you ſhould find your ſelf fill'd with Charity, without knowing what it is: and O how much better is it to be poſſeſs'd of it, than to underſtand it only by Speculation! A Husband-man cultivates, weeds, dungs and prunes his Vines: and ſo ſees them bring forth fair and pleaſant Grapes, without taking pains in the immediate Production of Grapes. So a Soul that continually cuts off, and removes from it all that can hinder the Love of *God*, and that mortifies it ſelf by an exact Conformity to Grace; would find it ſelf repleniſh'd with Charity, when it ſeem'd not to think the leaſt on it. On the contrary, thoſe who will have themſelves all on a ſudden inflam'd with the Love of *God*, without a previous Purification of their Heart, Affections and Faculties, when they ſeem to be pretty well advanc'd, they find themſelves low at the Foot of the Hill of Perfection: and they have ſometimes ſuch a weak and faint Flame of Charity in them, as to be extinguiſh'd with any bluſtering Blaſt of the Winds of Temptations or Af-

A Soul that mortifies it ſelf, finds it ſelf fill'd with Grace.

flictions. Let therefore these Lessons which I have already written to you, be your chief Study, by the Practice of which great Benefits shall accrue to your Soul. And what concerns *Love*, be pleas'd to accept graciously of that little which I am to discourse upon it; for you must expect the Fulness of it from the Holy Ghost, that being past all Controversy which the Apostle said, *The Love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.*

Rom. 5.

What Love is.

II. Love to God *is a Virtue, whereby we Love God, not out of any Fear of Punishment, or hope of reward, but for himself and his unspeakable Goodness.*

A Description of pure Love.

Love is then true and perfect, when the Loving Soul with all its Strength most earnestly pours it self into God; not seeking after any transitory or immortal Advantage in him: but simply loving him for his infinite Holiness, Perfection, Excellency, Blessedness, and incomprehensible and exalted Essence. O how much is a pure Soul afraid to love its *God* for any private Interest, or its own Satisfaction, because it sees that this most high *God*, Three and One, is in himself and by himself the First and Principal Cause of all Lovelineſs and what we can conceive of God, in God or with respect to Him, if it be not *God* himself, is infinitely less amiable than *God*

He that Loveth God, becauſe he is ſweet and pleaſant to them that love him, and who is excited to love him, becauſe of the Benefits he enjoys or expects from him, ſuch a one, is as yet but an imperfect Lover. But one who is enlighten'd with true and moſt pure Light, knows that the true Reaſon of the Lovelineſs of God is *God:* and the more he contemplates him in ſimple Faith, he loves him ſo much the more, and knows that he deſerves infinitely more Love than what he pays him. This is the precious Croſs of the true Lovers of *God*, that the more they love, they think they love the leſs: becauſe the greater Love produces the greater Light in a Loving Soul, and the greater Light manifeſts to the Lover more of the infinite Amiableneſs of his *God:* hence it is, that the more the Lovelineſs of *God* encreaſes in the Apprehenſion of the Lover, ſo much the more is his Love which he pays to his moſt amiable chief Good, extenuated in his inward Eſteem and Judgment.

The Croſs of one who has pure Love.

III. But we do not ſlide at one Step into this way of Loving. S. *Thomas* informs us, that the lively Conſideration of the Divine Goodneſs, that ſhowreth down its Benefits upon us, exciteth the Love of *God:* and that eſpecially (becauſe of the

How to be inflam'd with the Love of God.

great Weakneſs of our Mind, that muſt be led as it were, by the Hand until we arrive at the Loving Knowledge of the God-head) the Humane Nature of *Jeſus Chriſt* is the chiefeſt Expedient, to excite the Love of *God* in our Soul, above all other Benefits. Wherefore I judge it neceſſary for you frequently to unite your ſelf inwardly with the *Word* made *Man*, by admiring him, looking ſtedfaſtly on him by conſidering his Myſteries, imitating him, and exciting your ſelf to love him

John 10. *He is the Way, he is the Gate:* and to aſcend to the God-head by another way and to enter at any other Gate, is to deceive and expoſe our ſelves to the Danger of Precipices.

What Spiritual Intercourſe we muſt have with the Humanity of Chriſt.

IV. Read therefore of *Jeſus*, meditat on *Jeſus*, diſcourſe of *Jeſus:* act jointly and concurr with *Jeſus*: and long, pant and continually aſpire after *Jeſus*. Le his Doctrine be your Light, and his Actions your Teachers, his Sufferings you Comfort, his Holy Sacraments your Support, and in ſhort, let his Life, Paſſion and Death, be the moſt frequent an lovely Objects of your inflam'd Heart until his Grace ſhall be pleas'd to raiſe yo to the Divine Nature of your Spouſe.

V. And becauſe it is the common Opnion of Spiritual Maſters, that the mo

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prevailing means to ſtirr up the great Conflagrations of Love in our Heart, are the ſhort Prayers call'd *Ejaculatory Devotions*, ſhot like ſo many flaming Arrows dipt in Love towards a beloved *God*: here I will preſent you with ſome of them: not that I may engage you to tie your ſelf up inviolably to them; but that they may ſerve as Patterns for more, which will iſſue and ſpring from your Heart, by Force of Love, rather than of Wit.

EJACULATORY PRAYERS.

Ejaculatory Devotions moſt fit for kindling the Fire of Love in us.

1. O my Jeſus, O Love, O my Deſire, O my Hope, my Refuge, and my Comforter!

2. O my God, my Peace, my Reſt, my Delight, my Treaſure, and my Glory!

3. Alas when, when, Dear Jeſus, ſhall I be wholly thine, and thou wholly mine?

4. What can I deſire beſides thee, Dear Jeſus? And what will the whole World profit me without thee? Thou alone can'ſt ſatisfie me.

5. O Jeſus, my Happineſs, diſpoſe of me as thou thinkeſt fit, for I will conſtantly love thee!

6. O Soul, what doſt thou fear? If Jeſus hath prayed for thee, if he hath wept for thee, hath ſhed his Blood for thee, whereat ſhould'ſt thou be frighted? Why doſt thou not ſet thy ſelf to love Him without any other Care?

7. O my Spouſe, when wilt thou only poſſeſs all my Heart?

8. My Lord and my Glory, when ſhall I ſee thee? When ſhall I enjoy thee? When ſhall all Letts and Impediments be done away, and I be united to thee?

9. O my Happineſs, thou art ſtill mindful of me; alas, why ſhould not I alſo ſtill think on thee?

10. O God who art infinitely amiable, I will love thee without Intereſt.

11. O my Chiefeſt Happineſs, I will love thee in thy ſelf, and for thy ſelf, and not for me, or for my own Satisfaction or Advantage.

12. O Wiſe Jeſus, thou ordereſt every thing with Wiſdom and Love. I reſign my ſelf to thee, diſpoſe of me as thou thinkeſt fit: but grant that I may Love thee.

13. Grant, Dear Jeſus, that I may ſtill think on thee, and mind my ſelf no more.

14. Grant, O Saviour, that I may conſtantly love thee, and may no more love my ſelf.

15. O

15. O my Soul, commit thy ſelf to God. He knoweth, and thou art blind. He loveth thee aright, and thou loveſt thy ſelf inordinately and amiſs.

16. O God, when ſhall I loſe my ſelf entirely in thee, that I may be All found in thee?

VI. Make it therefore your ſtudied Care to be a Proficient in Love to your Moſt High Monarch, by the Practice of a Lively and Actual Faith, by Mortification, Ejaculatory Prayers, and Meditations upon God's Benefits, and the Sacred Myſteries of the *Word* made *Man*. In the mean time, conſider ſome other Leſſons which follow. I will propoſe unto you Three Motives, to awaken your unconcern'd and indifferent Spirit to the moſt lively Acts of Love. *Motives whereby you may encreaſe your Love.*

The Firſt is, The Sweetneſs, Perfection, Juſtice, and Profitableneſs of Love it ſelf: For what can be more Juſt, Sweet, Perfect, and of greater Uſe to a Soul, than to Love the Almighty, the Chiefeſt Good, and Uncreated and Unbounded Charity? What can be more Noble, than to perform on Earth, the Work of Searaphims and Bleſſed Spirits? Nay, even the Work of *God* Himſelf, who continually beholds, and comprehends Himſelf, and conſtantly, and without intermiſſion, loves Himſelf? 1.

The Second Motive, is, The Conſideration 2.

tion of the innumerable Benefits, wherewith our Dear Lord ſeems to beſiege us, that he may conſtrain us to Love him, and affectionately languiſh for him, as he burns with an infinite Love for us. The Earth, the Air, Light, the Heavens, the Fruits of the Earth, together with its Beaſts, the Sea with its Fiſhes, and all the Creatures, what are they but the Benefits of God's kind Providence beſtow'd upon us. Our Being, Faculties, Members, Soul, our natural or acquir'd Vertues, our Friends and Relations, and every thing that can yield us any Delight, Comlineſs, or Profit, what elſe are they but a multitude of Creatures, created by God, to oblige and advantage us. And what ſhall I ſay of Supernatual Gifts? Faith, the Pardon of our Iniquities repeated again and again, Holy Inſpirations, the Divine Sacrament, Angels to guard us, Wiſe Directors, the Sacred Writings, the bright Example of the Saints now in Heaven, the Interceſſion of our Deareſt Redeemer Jeſus Chriſt, the Precioufneſs of his Croſs, and of his Blood ſhed for our ſake; Pray, are not theſe Benefits able to melt us, and
3 make us languiſh in Love for God? And, finally, The Goodneſs, Beauty, and Perfection of the Ineffable, Infinite, and unconceivable Divine Eſſence, how great

Flames

Flames of Love ſhould they kindle in a Soul purified and brightened by the clear Light of Catholick Faith? Theſe things are briefly ſet down, but you muſt take a long time to weigh and conſider of them.

VII. The Actions then of Love to God, are as follow. 1. To aim at an Union with our Chiefeſt Happineſs, from whom, in whom, and by whom we have our Being, and all that we are, and whatſoever Good we perform. 2. To be Willing, and Content, and actually rejoyce that *God* is *God*, that is, a boundleſs Sea of Perfection, Bleſſedneſs, Bounty, Wiſdom, Omnipotence, and Beauty, and to rejoyce in all his Divine Attributes. 3. To be glad that God is ſerv'd, ador'd, and lov'd by Angels, and by all the Hoſt of Bleſſed Spirits, and all his faithful Creatures, and, finally, by the whole World, which holds entirely of Him. 4. To deſire the whole World to come to the Knowledge of the True God, and to embrace his holy Faith, and ſerve, and love, and adore Him; and that whoſoever hath offended him, may return, and repent; and that every thing may give Glory to God. 5. To be griev'd both at our own and other Men's Faults, which hath given occaſion for the Bowels of our Saviour *Jeſus* to loath us. 6. To purpoſe and reſolve (by the ſupport of his

The Actions of Charity.

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his heavenly Grace) to obſerve the Com-
7. mandments of God perfectly. 7. And alſo, to endeavour after the Obſervance of theſe Goſpel-Counſels that are proper for our State and Condition: and to be more obedient to the divine Motions and Inſpirations. Theſe laſt words challenge your Reflexion and Conſideration; becauſe our Acts of Diſobedience to inward Illuminations are almoſt numberleſs; the Excellency of which is ſurely made too manifeſt to us, who ſlight and neglect it.
8. 8. To be pleas'd with, and rejoyce in that which is the Will of God, and what his Divine Majeſty determines, both as to us, and all other Creatures, without regarding if the Divine Diſpoſal be favourable, or croſs and diſagreeable, if it be bitter or
9. ſweet. 9. In the ſame manner, to be griev'd at what is diſpleaſing unto God, and contradictory to his holy Precepts.
10. 10. And, finally, To ask of God in our Prayers, ſtill a more pure and ardent Love; by excluding, by all our Care and Strength, every thing that ſtands in oppoſition to this Divine Vertue.

Letter XXV.

1. *What Charity toward our Neighbours is.* 2. *The Acts of this Vertue.* 3. 4. *Some Precautions about Charity towards our Neighbours.* 5. *Marks, that shew some sorts of Love towards our Neighbours, not to be Charity.*

1. I Have discoursed on Charity towards our Neighbour, in my little Book Of *Meditations and Exercises for the Holy Week*, already Printed; and will therefore touch on a few things here, and come to a Close of this Treatise. *What Charity toward our Neighbour is.*

Brotherly Charity *is a Vertue whereby we love all our Neighbours, whether Friends or Enemies, for the Love of God.* It is in this last word that the Essence of this Charity consists, and the debarring of all foolish Reasons, which Self-love, and our blind Humane Nature suggest to defend its Hatred; Anger, Disdain and Revenge. 'Tis not our business to pry into, judge, or condemn the Conditions of our Neighbours, and to hate and disdain them, because of our byas'd Opinion and Prejudice. Our Lord God tells us, *Love thy Neighbour, out of Love to Me: regard therefore no other Motives for Loving him. He is my*

my Creature, he is made after my Image; he is redeemed with the Blood of a Crucified Saviour; he is capable of being poſſeſs'd with Sanctifying Grace, to be fed with the Divine Sacrament, and to be ſaved to all Eternity. Theſe are ſufficient and well-grounded Reaſons, (to any of us who hath lively Faith, and loveth God more than himſelf,) for loving our Neighbours, without relenting and recoiling becauſe their Conditions are diſagreeable or prejudicial to us.

Actions of Charity towards our Neighbour.

II. The Acts of this Charity are theſe: 1. To Love all Men, ſo far as they are capable of Everlaſting Bliſs, and of being Eternally united to God; and to love them as his Creatures, and out of Love to him. 2. To wiſh them all good things, and eſpecially theſe that are moſt true; ſuch are, a Lively Faith, Sanctifying Grace, the Remiſſion of all their Sins, Vertues and Perfections; and, finally, Glory Everlaſting. 3. And to wiſh them alſo the Goods of the Body, as far as they may ſerve to compaſs the real Goods of the Soul. 4. To Joy in all their Happineſs, and Temporal Good; but much more in their Spiritual Advantages, and in their growth in Chriſtian Vertues, or the help that they receive from God or his Creatures for ſuch an End. 5. To be griev'd at their Bodily Evils, but more-eſpecially

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at those that are Spiritual, that is, at their Sins, Defects, and at the Occasions that may induce them to offend *God*, and fall off from the good Life they had begun. 6. To wish to remedy all the Evils of our Neighbours, and not to deferr doing it, whenever the Occasion of helping them presents it self: for the Will that can, and ought to perform, and does it not, is no true Will. 7. Not to pass a rash Judgment upon any Person, nor yet treat any with Contempt: but to honour all Men, as it becomes a true Christian Decency, and still to think well of every Body. 8. To speak ill of none; but to approve of their Good, to praise their Virtues, and excuse or put a fair Construction on their Failings. 9. To oblige and do good to all Men, as much as possible, by Example, Word and Deed. 10. And finally to Love your very Enemies, to pray for your Persecutors; to speak well of those that backbite you, and to do them good who wrong and hurt you. These things are not understood by our Senses, nor by the reach of Humane Judgment: but we are taught them by Faith and *Jesus Christ*, the true and Supreme Wisdom made Man.

6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

III. I must give you Notice of a few things that seem to me of no small Use to your Soul, as to the Purpose of Loving your

Some Cautions concerning Love to our Neighbours.

1. your Neighbours. The First is, That you ought to love them as your self, but not in the same Degree, much less above your self, when it concerns Spiritual Perfection. You may in temporal things (and 'tis good to do so) preferr the good of your Neighbour before your own: but you ought not to render your self guilty of the least Sin, or deliberate Imperfection for the good of another Man. Jesus Christ

John 13. commands us to *love one another as he loved us.* He indeed embrac'd and underwent the hardest of Crosses, but was far from committing so much as the least

2. Fault for us. The Second is, that Charity, is no natural, sensitive, nor yet simply rational Love, but is higher than any other, being supernatural and infus'd by *God.* Therefore in the Loving of our Neighbour, we ought not to regard Sympathy or natural Affection, nor their Conditions which are agreeable to, and please our Sense; nor their Manners and Talents which may endear them to our rational Faculty: but the true Reason, End, and Motive of Loving them must be supernatural. They are capable of Divine Grace: their Names may be on record in the Book of Eternal Life: it is the Will, good Pleasure, and Glory of *God*, that we should love them. Whoso-

ever

ever yields not to these three Reasons (besides some others that I have above mentioned) has no true Notion of Charity.

IV. I must also advertise you, that 3. Charity, the less of Sense it has in it, 'tis so much the more remov'd from Danger. How much the less it craves natural Reasons, and plausible Conditions in a Neighbour; so much the more does it rely on Faith, and declares it self to be divine. But when Love comes to be singular towards any Person, endued with the Conditions of Beauty, Youth, or Eloquence, and a natural Grace, or with Nobility and Riches, we must be very watchful over such Affections, and much more if the Sex be different. *Love begins very often in the Spirit* (said *Gerson*) *but is resolv'd into carnal Love. Spiritual Persons* (saith the same Author) *are not so much jealous of any thing as of Love; because it is the most violent of all our Passions. He who loves out of a pure Affection of Charity, loves Virtue, neither is he much concern'd about the Conditions of the Body.* Charity is a Virtue 1 Cor. 14 that *never faileth.* Love therefore that in your Neighbours which will never fail: and who does not see that this is chiefly the Soul and its good Works, which shall crown it with Glory in Heaven?

When Neighbourly Love is not the Love of Charity.

5. Every kind of Love that betrays you into Sin is not Charity. Every Love that binds over your Affections to Earthly Things, to Intereſt (the Trap and Stumbling-Block of the Soul) to Pleaſures, and Honours; is not the Love of Charity. Every Love that hinders your Perfection, that moves your Paſſions, that ſtuffs you with Imaginations, that drives you from the Divine Preſence, and confines and ties you in the Preſence of the Perſon beloved, and that carries you off from Charity to the reſt of your Neighbours, by adhering too cloſely to that which is agreeable to you; is no Love of Charity. I might ſay more: but this may ſuffice, if it be well practis'd. And if you are faithful in theſe few things, our *Lord Jeſus* will enrich you with the Plenty of his Light, to whom be Glory for ever and ever.

Letter XXVI.

To One of his Spiritual Daughters.

1. *The Privilege of a Contemplative Life over an Active, whose Duty it is to acquire moral Virtues.* 2. *The Practice of Obedience, Poverty, and the Necessity of Internal Mortification more than of External.* 3. & 4. *A Tryal and Examination how the Passions work, and, are reduced to Love and Hatred.* 5. *The true Being and Existence of God, and annihilation of the Creatures.* 6. *The Affections and Qualities of Confidence, and tender and ardent Breathings after God.*

I feel many pleasant and prevailing Incentives in my Soul, to lay out the most of my Labours to the Assistance of your Soul, and to direct you to the highest Perfection worthy of your Vocation, and of your most amiable Spouse: 'tis therefore proper that I obey the Will of my *God*, and that you cheer up, and take Courage, whilst you see, that you have a great Advocate in my Heart, who pleads

your Cauſe boldly: nor will ever give me Reſt, until I ſee you united with, and made a real Spouſe of *Jeſus*, the *Word made Man.*

The Contemplative Life is more Sublime than the Active.

I. *Firſt*, you muſt know, That the Contemplative is more Sublime than the Active Life: So that we can never begin the Contemplative Life as it becomes us to do, if we have not brought the Active Life to a good pitch of Perfection. The Higher only begins where the Lower ends; and the Higheſt part of the one touches the Loweſt of the other. It is therefore neceſſary, that by the help of God's Grace (which will aſſiſt you, as I hope in the tender Mercies of Jeſus) you endeavour to be poſſeſs'd of all the Moral Vertues, (the acquiſition of which belongs to the Active Life) and that in the moſt eminent and greateſt degree that is poſſible, without hearkening to the falſe Murmurings of Self-Love, and Senſe, two curs'd Foxes, form'd for Forging and Cheating.

The Practice of Perfect Obedience, is ſpecified in the words of the Lord's Prayer.

II. But to deſcend to Particulars: Your Obedience muſt be Angelical; and for this end, you are to make uſe of that comfortable Article of the Lord's Prayer, *Thy Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.* Let every Signal of Obedience, whether from a Reaſonable Creature, or the Sound of a Bell, eccho back to your Heart theſe Syllables,

Syllables, *As it is in Heaven.* You by this time understand where my Notion drives; for you may imagine how God is obey'd in Heaven. I omit to speak of Virginal Chastity, because I am well convinc'd of the Mercy of Christ to you on this Point; and only tell you, That I would have you to be a true Angel. And as concerning *Poverty*, Dear Daughter, I freely tell you my plain Thoughts. I would have you Extraordinary: And if I thought that there were any in your Society who excell'd you in *Poverty*, O how would I wish to be able to flie thither, and carry off every thing that robs you of the Glory of being Poorer than the Poorest. If you would be my true Daughter, love Want, as much as the Covetous Man loves Superfluity: And flie Superfluity, more than the Covetous Man flies Want. Be upon a perpetual Guard, not to take notice of one Needle, one Pin, or Thread, that bears not this Superscription, *I am necessary:* And as soon as this Name is cancell'd, so soon rid your self of it. Look upon the World to be a Country infected with the Plague, for a Spouse of *Jesus*: as also all Goods that are not precisely necessary; throw them away, as infectious. Be not deceiv'd with things that are obtruded upon you under colour of Devo-

tion. Where any thing of Matter is in the caſe, and if it be lov'd, there is no pure Devotion to be found, ſeeing this wholly depends upon the Spirit. I remember, you gave me an Account of your caſting them off, and it afforded me Matter for Comfort. But I expect ſomething more than ordinary from you: wherefore be pleas'd to give me a more exact Account how you ſtand as to this Point. As to the Mortification both of your External and Internal Senſes, in this your Care muſt be continual. I uſe to ſay betwixt Jeſt and Earneſt. When the Soul has once got within the Gate of Paradiſe, it may then turn to Mortification, and ſay, *Dear Companion, I thank you for the good Company you have hitherto allow'd me.* But you need not tell it ſo any ſooner; for we are compounded of a certain bad Mold, that is ſtill producing new Herbs either noxious, or at leaſt uſeleſs: So that we muſt not lay down the Weapon of *Mortification*, which may hinder theſe Weeds to continue long green in the Garden of your Spouſe *Chriſt*, which offend his bright and pure Divine Eyes. But I am more earneſt about the care of *Internal Mortification*; becauſe the Actions to be wrought in you are to be very Intrinſick. As to the *Outward*, I recommend the Eyes, Ears, and Tongue.

Mortification *muſt accompany us in all the Courſe of our Life.*

Tongue. The two firſt obtrude ſo many ſuperfluous Objects upon our weak Spirit, that they over-charge it. And the third opens the cloſe Veſſel of our Heart ſo wide, that it makes the beſt Spirits to exhale. I confeſs, *Dear Daughter in Jeſus*, that I have been more than once ſurpriz'd and ſtartled at a great and true Sentence of the Great Doctor, St. *Gregory*, who, in the End of his *Morals*, expreſſes himſelf thus: *'Tis certain that our Mind is much diſtracted even when we make it our bus'neſs to ſpeak aright; for the Integrity and Recollection of the Mind is impair'd, whilſt we are contriving Words to expreſs our Thoughts, for Words draw the Mind out of it ſelf.* My Daughter, I know your diſtracting Office, and I pity you: but I once more tell you, That one who loves God, can perform Wonderful Things. What is purely neceſſary, cannot hurt you. Be Jealous of that Inner-Apartment where your Spouſe lodgeth; and let not impertinent, or ſo many different Objects, enter it, to raiſe Diſorder and Confuſion therein.

The Neceſſity that lies upon us, to reform our Senſitive and Underſtanding Faculties, they act in us.

III. I could ſay much concerning the Interior, but I will compriſe much in few words. There are two Internal Parts, which, by the Grace of God, we muſt labour to rectifie. Unhappy we, who

are ſo much out of order, by the remnants of Original Sin, and ſo many Actual Tranſgreſſions which we have added over-and-above, that ſmall Pains will not ſerve our turn, to reform our pitiful Deformities! One of theſe Parts is the *Senſitive*, and the other the *Intellective Faculty*.

The Spring of our Paſſions, and their Nature.

The Senſitive lies in the Heart and Brain, beſides the External Senſes, to which we have ſpoken in ſome meaſure. The Heart, which is ſituated in our Breaſt, is not moved, until the Brain has firſt apprehended ſome Object, which may ſtir up theſe Motions of the Heart called *Paſſions*. Now the Brain does ſometime apprehend a thing as good, I mean, delightful or honourable to the Animal Man: and of a ſudden begets the Paſſion of Love in the Heart, which takes Complacence in the Good it apprehends. And if it ſees that it can be the better for it, a Deſire is excited which runs out towards the beloved Object. And if it be obtain'd, the Heart is quieted, and rejoyceth with Senſible Joy. But if the Brain apprehends a thing Evil, Unpleaſant, or Diſhonourable; the Heart is preſently provok'd to the Paſſion of *Hatred*: And if we take an Aprehenſion that we may be the worſe for it; we are moved to Evaſion or Averſion. And if this Evil ſeize us, it creates the Paſſion

of

of Senſible *Sadneſs*, proceeding from the Evil preſent. Which, if we cannot maſter it, occaſions Anger. To theſe Paſſions may be added the following one's. If the Bodily Good which I conceive be Great; this awakens in me Hope, provided the thing be expected, and within my reach. And it is ſtyl'd Boldneſs, to overcome the Rubs and Obſtacles that lie in my way. And if I ſee that there is no poſſibility to compaſs it, this awakens the Paſſions of Deſpair. But if the Evil that I apprehend be Great, and that it can overtake me, I ſuffer Fear: And if any thing occurr which diſpleaſes me, and if I wiſh to have Revenge, even in ſuch a caſe I am kindled into Anger. Now, how ſhall we carry our ſelves amidſt ſo many inordinate Enemies, which we bear in our own Breaſt? *Who ſhall deliver us from this Body of Death?* may we ſay, after St. *Paul*. How extreme Humility ought we to put on! Alas, Alas, what is Man without *God?*

IV. Should I now ſet you Rules for all theſe Paſſions, as it would require a deal of Time, ſo would it involve you in endleſs Labyrinths. I ſhall limit my ſelf to Two Rules, or rather to One, which will hold good for all. You ſee that the Root of all other Paſſions, is the Love of Senſible and Corporeal Good Things, and the Hatred

Love and Hatred are the Roots of all the other Paſſions, and what Pains we muſt be at to vanquiſh them.

Hatred of Bodily Evils. One therefore who carefully provides againſt theſe Paſſions, and maſters them, has already maſter'd and conquer'd all the Reſt: As if one ſhould drain the Fountain, he dries the Stream alſo; and if one cutteth off the Root, he killeth the Tree. Let us therefore conſider one learned Propoſition of Father S. *Philip*, who was wont to ſay, *I find nothing in this world that pleaſes me.* And we read of *F. Vincentius Carafa*, a Man truly Holy, that he us'd two Means to arrive at Perfection. By Force of Prayer he eſtabliſhed theſe Maxims of Truth in his Heart, *There is nothing in the World that's worthy of being deſired by us but God: In whoſe Preſence every Being that is or can be created, is like a Shadow in reſpect of the Sun. On the contrary, nothing can be term'd Evil but to loſe God. He who is poſſeſs'd of God, tho' he hath nothing beſide; hath all things. He who hath all the World and wants God, hath nothing.* He being grounded on this Truth, would allow nothing to partake of his hearty Love but *God:* and would hate nothing but Sin. Seeing there is nothing that is, in effect, good or Evil in this World, but to Love *God*, which is really good, and to hate Sin, which is really evil. And thus this Holy Man render'd himſelf Indifferent, nay,

nay, insensible to every thing. You must endeavour to establish these great Foundations in your Mind by the Grace of *God*, and Light of Faith, and be very cautious in this Principle to suppress speedily all the Motions of the Inferior Part, when the Mind would distinguish betwixt what is good and evil in corporeal Things, or when it would Love or Hate them.

V. Rectify speedily all the foolish Motions of your Mind by the Light of Faith, which gives you to understand that *God* alone is, and that he is truly and essentially eternal, unchangeable, infinite, most perfect and incomprehensible: and all other things have a Being, which in respect of their Nature is no *Being*, nay, what Being they have is lent them, and deriv'd from the infinite Being of *God*. And our Being is like an empty and perishing Shadow which every Minute depends upon *God* who preserves us: else every thing that is created would without the continual Providence of *God*, drop into its natural Nothingness: all the Idea's and Imaginations that I set up in my Fancy, immediately come to nothing upon my ceasing to frame them. And this our Saviour intimated to S. *Catherine* of *Siena* in these Words, *I am who am, and thou art one who art not.* *God* is *God*.

God *only exists.*

God

God is his own Being. *God* is all his own Perfection, and all his own Attributes, which make no Multiplicity in him, but the moſt ſimple and one Eſſence of *God* who is infinite. But the Creature which naturally ſhould not be, were it not that *God* has created it, and preſerves it: and ſo it having no Being in it ſelf, but in *God* and from *God*, is ſomething that is not. Be therefore always ready to reduce every thing in your own Mind to its proper Notion and Truth. The Creatures to their own Nothingneſs in themſelves and out of *God*: and aſcribe all their Being, all their Goodneſs, all their Perfection, all their Lovelineſs, and Glory to that moſt amiable, moſt perfect, ſuper-ſubſtantial and ſuper-eſſential *God*, who is Three and One, from whom, by whom, and in whom all things are. And thus being rais'd above all the Motions of your Heart, above all the Opinions and Imaginations of your Brain, above all the Diſcourſes of Reaſon, having your touring Mind enlighten'd by Faith, and enflam'd with the Love and Grace of *God*, annihilate every thing: and conſider and be taken up with *God*, without ſeeing or underſtanding him, who is above our View, Imagination or Comprehenſion, in whom, and by whoſe Decrees and Diſpenſations you

The Annihilation of the Creatures in God.

you may ſtill abide immoveable, and unſhaken in the Bottom of your Soul: and you ſhall make good the laſt Verſe of the Croſs, *Aſpire Till thou poſſeſs and Nothing more deſire.* But if the Paſſions bluſter, foam and ſtorm in the inferior Part of our Soul: and if your Reaſonings do roar, rage and make a Noiſe in your Brain; ſeek ſtill after the ſublime Station of *God's Eſſence*, and annihilate every other thing: and tho' the Senſes and Devils ſhould act their Part never ſo violently and fooliſhly, do not regard them, but turn to the Station of all, who is *God.*

Union with the Will of God, and the Effects thereof.

VI. The moſt Part of the foregoing Sheet was Written before I had received yours, dated the twenty eighth of *April*, and which came to my Hand upon the fourth of *May.* In which you tell me that *your Will is united to the Will of God*, which I am mightily pleas'd with: For it is *good to ſee God working in all his Creatures.* O when ſhall it come to paſs, that you may no more inwardly ſee the Creatures, but that God may remain alone? Dear Daughter, we reſemble ſo many wild Trees, which bring forth ſoure Fruit for unclean Animals, but if we ſap their Branches, and ingraft ſome noble Imp, they become worthy of a King's Garden. So our Will can of it ſelf produce

duce certain Fruits of brutiſh and baſe Works: but if we remove the Branches of our Will and Being: and by Force of Faith ingraft the Being of *God*, and the Will of *God* by the Force of our Love, by ſeeing and willing that *God* is *God*, and that he ſhould *will* and not we, who can tell what fair and luſcious Fruit of Paradiſe *God* might be pleas'd to produce in us? It is now near three a Clock at Night: wherefore, My moſt Dear in *Chriſt*, be now content with theſe Foundations, and let them take deep root in your Heart: and afterward, God willing, I ſhall not delay to proſecute this Work, and teach you many ſublime Matters, until I bring you to the pitch of Perfection. I deſign to diſcourſe more nicely and particularly concerning your Interior, and *Intellectual* Part. I reſolve likewiſe to treat of the three *Theological Virtues*, and finally of *Contemplation.* Nay, rouſe up, and be confident. O how much worth is that Blood that *Chriſt Jeſus* hath ſhed for you! Even for you, nay, I ſay, even for you. Remark it well and believe it. *God* made Man, has groan'd, did ſweat Drops of Blood, pray'd, was afflicted and ſuffered Death for you. And can we have ſmall Aſſurance on ſo juſt and ſolid Grounds? Nay, ſure Daughter thou art Deaf, cruel, ingrate

The Means whereby to render our Actions acceptable to God.

Conſiderations to excite our Love and Confidence.

ingrate and misbelieving, if you Hope for little from your Eternal Father, when you see that your Spouse *Jesus*, the only begotten and well-beloved Son of the infinite Father, weeps, groans, prays, languishes, is afflicted, suffers Agonies, and dies for you. It is for you, I say, Daughter, that *God* made Man, has suffered so much. What will not his Tears moisten? What will not his Groans obtain? Who could give a Refusal to his Prayers and Entreaties? Who would not be mov'd to pity by his pining Sorrow? Who would not be satisfied with his Punishments? What cannot be obtain'd by his Agonies? Can there be any thing in the most rich Treasury of the most adorable Trinity, that the precious Death of the only begotten Son of *God* may not claim a Tittle to, who was made the Son of a Virgin, that he might become the Ransom, Head, Spouse and Reward of our Souls? Ah, *Jesus!* Ah Dear *Jesus*, the Darling of Heaven and Earth, who can look upon thee, and not be ravish'd with thy Love? And who can love thee, and not hope and assuredly expect from thy most Merciful Father, whatsoever he will ask in thy Name? Nay, nay, most high Father, we who are poor Wretches in our selves, yet being united to our most glo-

rious

rious Head, thy Son *Jesus*, come with all Boldness to thy Throne, and most confidently beg of thee to grant us Love, nay, a most ardent, pure, and Seraphick Love: and if we are capable of any greater Love, we beg it of thee for the Merits, Blood and Death of *Jesus*. Deny us not this O Father, We are thy Children, we are united to thy only Begotten Son, our elder Brother *Christ*. What can'st thou deny the Members of so excellent a Head? Lord, Lord, be graciously pleas'd to grant our request, we desire to love thee, and that exceedingly. O grant us Love, or turn us to our first Nothing. *Dear Child* doubt not, *God* is Charity and Goodness. 'Tis impossible for Charity to be hard and inexorable, or for Goodness not to be diffusive and communicative. Let us Hope and be confident. Let us Love, even let us be inflam'd with a pure, disinterested, solid, substantial and still encreasing Love.

Letter XXVII.

1. & 2. *The Arts of the Devil to draw the Soul over to Puſillanimity and Faint-heartedneſs:* 3. *Marks to know true Humility by.* 4. *We muſt never part with Magnanimity.* 5. *How to know ones Self truly.* 6. *The Devil's Tricks and Devices to draw us into Dejection of Mind.* 7. *Maxims of Humility borrow'd from S.* Auguſtin. 8. *How one that is truly Humble is to behave himſelf towards his Neighbours.* 9. *And how he muſt guard againſt the Devil.*

O My *God!* In how ſhort a Space of Time is the Scene of my Daughter's Soul chang'd, from Joy to Tears, from Serenity and Tranquility into Trouble and Tempeſt! But fear not, no, no, and I again bid you not to fear. Let that exuberant Fountain of Lyes, and indefatigable Artificer of Cheats, even prate and ſuggeſt as he pleaſes, that you ſhould Write to me your Imaginations, and by Conſequence deceive me: that thereby the Hope to which I invite you and the Encouragement which I wiſh to give you, and the Promiſes which I ſo oft ratifie to you, may all fall to the Ground: ſeeing theſe Thoughts are not founded upon any

The various Methods that the Devil takes to diſquiet a Soul.

thing elſe, but your own fallacious Imaginations, that deceive you; and you being impos'd upon, would make me believe odd and ſtrange things of you, but they are all falſe and grounded on a Miſtake. Tho' he ſhould even repreſent to you, that you are a Theatre of Imperfections unknown to me, and tho' he gives you to underſtand that to deny it were too proud a Preſumption. Tho' he ſhould print a thouſand Confuſions, Imaginations, and violent Thoughts in your Fancy, and ſhould ſtir up in your Heart the Paſſions relating to it: and make you believe that theſe Fantaſms are voluntary in you, becauſe you cannot remove them. Yet I tell you more frankly than ever, *Fear not*, *Fear not*: and I confidently aſſure you, that I am not miſtaken in your Behalf, nor do you deceive me, nor have you at any time done ſo in the Accounts you have given me of your inward State, nor have you ever written to me any other Imaginations, but the Suggeſtions which that Fraudulent Spirit has put in your Head, and which will amount to nothing. I know how I ſpeak, and that I ſpeak in the actual Preſence of my *God*, and of the Eternal Judge of my Soul, Fear not. This ſeems no new or unuſual thing to me: and I am too much inur'd to

ſuch

ſuch Skirmiſhes. Theſe your Engagements are as yet but trifling and inconſiderable. My Heart is prepar'd and ready to aſſiſt you in far greater Battels than theſe amount to. Be always courageous. O how great a Field of War is Solitude! Did you believe that your Cell ſhould prove a Paradiſe? I aſſure you it will prove ſo, but it muſt firſt be your Purgatory. Fear not Dear Child. How well ſhall you underſtand the moſt of my *Letters* practically, whereby I have put you on your guard, and have given you previous Warning of your future Conflicts.

The hard Trials that Solitude expoſes us to, and what Advantages reſult from them.

II. But to come to particular Remedies, I reſolve to let you underſtand the profound and true Doctrine of my Angelical Maſter, the Knowledge of which, as it ſhall occaſion great Happineſs to your Soul: ſo the not knowing of it ſhould prove a perpetual Nurſery of continual and almoſt inextricable Temptations. There is no devout Perſon let him be never ſo much a Novice, but underſtands the great need we have of holy Humility in our Spiritual Courſe. I indeed uſe to ſay, that I can hardly find, in this my Office of Directing Devout Souls, any Temptation, that puzzles and perplexes me more than to overcome this of Humility. *God* deliver me from the Humility in-

Falſe Humility how hurtful it proves.

ſtill'd by the Father of Pride. O my *God!* how much more eaſy is it to draw down thoſe who ſoar high on the Wings of Vanity, than to retrieve thoſe who are tumbling down the Precipice of Fear. It is eaſy to ſhow a proud Man ſome palpable and evident Inducements why he ſhould be humbled: but a faint-hearted and deſponding Perſon, who clearly perceives his own Miſeries, reckons his Falls by Number and Meaſure (one while as they are real, and another while as they are apparent) and cannot certainly be aſſur'd of his Perſeverance in Good, and diſcerns not the ſecret and hidden Aſſiſtances of Grace, and of *God*, How much Pains does it require to recover his fainting Spirits, and to inſpire him with Reſolution! The Holy Scriptures make uſe of no Expreſſions ſo frequently as thoſe which are for the Comfort and Encouragement of drooping Spirits. If my Deſign had not been to write Inſtructions, I might have adduc'd ſome Paſſages of Holy Writing to fortifie you againſt Fear: but I will reſerve them to another Occaſion.

III. But that we may fully underſtand this Diſcourſe, let us imagine a Spiritual and Devout Life to be a moſt Beautiful Heaven, whoſe Virtues are ſo many Stars.

But

But as the material Heaven turns round upon its two Poles, the upper being the Arctick, and the lower the Antarctick: ſo the two Poles of the Spiritual Heaven are Truth and Charity. That perfects the Underſtanding and this the Will: and all other Virtues muſt needs turn upon the Hinges of theſe two conſummate Virtues, which renew in us our true Likeneſs with *God:* who (according to the Teſtimony of S. *John* the Evangeliſt) is the uncreated, immenſe, and primary Truth and Love. And Charity can never dwell in in any Soul which is not firſt poſſeſs'd with Truth. And on this Score the ſame Evangeliſt called the Word made Man *full of Grace* (which is the ſame with Charity acccording to *Scotus*) *and of Truth.* Seeing therefore the Elect, and thoſe that are predeſtinated muſt *be conform'd to the Image of the Son of God*, (for ſo S. *Paul* terms it) they muſt alſo be full of Grace, *Charity*, and Truth.

Truth and Love are the two Poles of the Spiritual Heaven, on which all the other Virtues turn.

John 1.

This real and ſupernatural Truth in the Underſtanding is nothing elſe but Faith, which is the Fountain and Means of Humility. Therefore as ſoon as Faith is infus'd into a Soul by our *Lord God*, it makes that Soul know the Author and Creator of all things: and the chief and firſt Principles of this Catholick Faith,

This Truth in the Underſtanding is nothing but Faith, which is the Source of Humility.

are the Myſteries of the Unity of the Divine Eſſence or Nature, and the Trinity of Divine Perſons, and the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, and the Creation of all Creatures out of Nothing, which would drop into their firſt Nothing, if *God* did not preſerve them in Being. And this profound and *Voluntary Knowledge* of the Immenſity of *God*, and of the Nothingneſs of the Creature we call *Humility*, and the Throne of Truth. I therefore ſaid *Voluntary Knowledge*, intending thereby to ſignifie that the bare Knowlege of our own Nothingneſs is not the true Virtue of Humility: but is a Directory, by which the Will muſt be qualified and temper'd, and its Appetites curb'd and kept under, that they may not tranſgreſs their Bounds, and in that Will which keepeth the Creature low within its own Sphere, conſiſts the Eſſence of Humility, What I have already ſaid, and am to ſay, is the Doctrine of the Angelical Doctor, and is commonly receiv'd, and cannot be denied. And becauſe Pride is ſo abominable to *God*, and deſtructive of all good things (for the Prophet ſaith that the *Proud are continual workers of Iniquity.*) hence it is that all Spiritual Maſters ſay as much, and that thoſe who are truly devout, take ſo much pains to make themſelves Maſters of

Pſal. 119. 51. Superbi inique agunt uſquequaque. *Vulg.*

of true Humility: but ſtill too little is ſaid of its Neceſſity, and too little done to obtain it perfectly. For my part I uſe to ſay, that Man's Task is to dig a Pit, and never come at the Bottom, which is his Nothingneſs, and to climb up a Hill and never to reach its inacceſſible Top, and this is the compleat Eſſence of *God*.

IV. So far we agree: but the Miſchief is, that whilſt the Soul ſearcheth after Truth, or to ſpeak more clearly, Humility; it runs into Miſtakes; and when it thinks to avoid the Gulph of Pride on the one ſide, it falls into Puſillanimity, or inordinate Meanneſs and Dejection of Mind on the other, It is therefore as certain as Truth it ſelf, that Man conſider'd in himſelf, and without *God*, and out of Him, knows nothing, can do nothing, is nothing, and and poſſeſſes nothing but Imperfections, and merits nothing but Puniſhments. But it is equally certain, that Man conſidered as *God*'s Creature, and having his Being in Him, has a Title to all Perfections. It was a Saying of a Holy and Reverend Divine, That *Man, all alone, Strange! how ſmall a thing is he?* But *God and Man being well united and unanimous together, arrive at the Perfection of all Things.* Let true Humility be accompanied with Magnanimity: becauſe 'tis certain (according

The true Senſe of Humility.

S. Oldo Clun.

to S. *Thomas)* that for a Soul to drive at, or aſpire after high Matters, preſuming on its own Strength, is contrary to Humility. But for it to aim at great Atchievements, putting its Confidence in the Divine Aſſiſtance, this does no manner of way claſh with Humility, but is virtuous Magnanimity. And ſeeing Humility is a Truth, whoſe chief Operation conſiſts in the total Subjection of the Soul to *God*; let us briefly examine how to practiſe it virtuouſly, without falling into Extreams. I am then in a State of Verity and Uprightneſs, when I render to every thing its due. When by Faith I diſcern that primary, omnipotent, and infinite Being of my Creator: I at the ſame time ſee that he conveys to me, whatſoever I have of natural or ſupernatural Being: and this ſecond is Grace and infus'd Virtues. And hence it comes to paſs, that I annihilate and forego my own Being before my *God:* and remain a Cipher by giving up all my natural Eſſence to him. And by referring to him all my Being which is deriv'd from Grace and Virtue; I remain with my Nothingneſs which is Imperfections and Faults: and I admire and adore the moſt high *God* from this Abyſs of Lowlineſs. But if I afterward diſcover, that this *God* (in whom I live,

live, move, and from whom I derive my Powers and Faculties) beſtows all theſe Benefits on me, and grants me a larger Share of ſome of them, than what he does to others; I may without any Violence or Detriment to Humility, own and allow my ſelf to have received a greater Portion of this Gift from *God*. And this holds as well in things natural as Moral. Wherefore I know that I have more Knowledge than you. And the Bleſſed and humble Mother of our Saviour knew perfectly well how uprightly and virtuouſly ſhe had liv'd, above the Common Standard of the World. And the moſt eminently humble Humanity of *Jeſus*, had an accurate Knowledge of its Endowments, Virtues and Perfections. Whereupon when the Bleſſed Virgin out of a Senſe of her own Nothingneſs had ſaid. *The Lord hath regarded the lowlineſs of his Hand-maiden*, could alſo ſay with the ſame Light of Truth, *For behold from henceforth all generations ſhall call me bleſſed. For he that is mighty hath magnified me.* And her moſt excellent Son *Jeſus* when he heard himſelf call'd *Good Maſter*, anſwer'd with a great deal of Zeal, *Why calleſt thou me good? None is good but God.* And upon another Occaſion he avouch'd *that his Doctrine was not his own, but of his heavenly*

Luke 1.

Matth. 19.

heavenly Father: and order'd himself to
Ps. 22. 6. be prophetically call'd *A worm and no man: a very scorn of men, and the out-cast of the people.* Thus by a clear View of the Divinity that was lodg'd in him, he freely
John 5. declar'd that *the Father judgeth no man, but hath given all Judgment to the Son.*
Mat. 28. And at another time, *All Power is given me both in Heaven and in Earth.* My Dear Child, gather from hence that true *Humility* is *Truth.*

How to know what is in us that is properly ours, and what belongs to God.

V. It is therefore one thing for one to look upon himself with his own Riches alone which are a Nothing, and his Faults: and another to regard himself as cloathed with these Endowments which *God* has vouchsaf'd to deposite in our hands. If I consider my self the first way, I seriously own that I am the least of all Creatures, because I see something of *God* in each of them. And in the second manner I know that *God* has planted something in me, which he has not endued another with. If the Sun were gifted with Reason, Humility could not oblige him to account himself darker, and more dim and gloomy than the Planets; tho' it would oblige him to acknowledge and confess, that he is by Nature a Nothing; and that his Light owes its Creation and Preservation to *God:* and that

God

God could reduce him to nothing: and the more Light he has, the more are his Ties and Obligations to Divine Mercy, and ſo much the more ought he to love *God*; and the ſtricter ſhall the Account be he is to make of the great Gifts received. Here I have given you a Draught of Perfect and true Humility, that is not cringing, and cowardly, but couragious and confident. But I deſire you to be inſtructed in this Point by a Learned Divine who was wont to ſay, that *Humility is like a Brook that in the fair Days of Summer becomes poor in Water, and hardly creeps in its low Channel, but in rainy and boiſterous Winter-Weather, runs impetuouſly in a full Stream and overflows its Banks. Thus ought an humble Soul to leſſen and annihilate it ſelf in Proſperity; and to put on Boldneſs and Courage in the midſt of Adverſities, Temptations and Trials.* And to ſay with S. *Paul*, *I can do all through Chriſt who ſtrengtheneth me.*

Laurent. Juſtinian.

Phil. 4. 13.

VI. Now, Dear Child, open the inward Eyes of your Soul, and let not Sorrow and Anguiſh, occaſion'd by the deceitful Craft of your Enemy, oppreſs or lie heavy on your Spirit. For he by perſwading you of one Principle (that ſeems true to unwary Humility) makes you believe, that you are very wicked: and

The Prejudices that the Devil ſtamps upon this Virtue.

and that *God* will not allow you any Grace or Pardon: that all the paſt, preſent, or future Good is but a Miſtake, an Appearance only and imaginary Illuſion: and that the Evil and Guilt in you are real; and ſo by means of theſe Lyes, raiſes Scruples, Torments, baſe Dejection of Spirit; Darkneſs and deſperate Diſcouragements. O how much ſhould the Boldneſs of your Spirit encreaſe amidſt theſe cloudy and tempeſtuous Winter-Storms. Do not thus ſimply give credit to the Suggeſtions and Apprehenſions of a deluded Fancy. Look, Look well, and make an accurate Reflexion on what *God* has plac'd in the Bottom of your Soul, in a way unknown to Senſe. Obſerve that moſt real Anxiety and Carefulneſs you entertain for the ſole Glory and Satisfaction of your *God*, the ſole Object of your Love. Conſider what holy Spiritual Fear you have of diſpleaſing him, tho' it were but by a ſmall conſiderate Sin. Conſider, how far your Heart is diſentangled from the miſerable Creatures, in whom the myſtical Love of your Soul, which breaths after, and only aſpires to the Ark of the God-head, finds no more reſt. Weigh how much your Spirit is conſumed with an imperceptible inflam'd Deſire and longing to break looſe from the Nets of the Senſes,

How the Soul may diſcover in it ſelf the Foundation of theſe Virtues which the Devil conceals from it.

Senſes, the Gins of Imagination, and Snares of the Paſſions, and from the Knowledge and Affections of the Underſtanding: and to fly like a ſolitary Sparrow into this unknown Solitude, where it may remain in the only Fellowſhip of, and be united to the uncreated and incomprehenſible Purity of its principal and only Good. Ah, Child, and will you fear? And will you not obſerve, that all theſe things, that ſeem to you to be Sins, are tyrannical Uſurpations upon you, and not the reſult of your Free-Will? And if at any time you think that you have made any wrong Steps; do you not remark how ſudden it was and not well-conſidered? What then occaſions your Fear? What matters it what your natural Propenſion, and your ſenſitive and brutiſh Part be? I ſometimes ſay, Unhappy ſhould I be, if I were actually ſuch, as upon Occaſions I take my ſelf to be. And if the Wickedneſs of the Devil and the Machinations that he hatches and works in me were my Sins, how could I be ſaved? *Dear Child*, our Brain and Carnal Heart are two Theatres, where the Devils repreſent their impertinent and curſed Tragedies. I cannot put a Stop to them, when my *God* for his moſt deep and compaſſionate Ends and Purpoſes of purifying me

The Power that the Devil receives to act upon our Brain and Corporeal Faculties, and how ſtily he does it.

me that way, permits them to put these poor inward Faculties, into horrible Disorder and Confusion. Our Business is to let *God* compleat his Will in us, without so much as casting one Glance of our Spiritual Eye upon these impious Actors. But if you tell me, that these Storms are rais'd by your self, and that you seem to be the Author of them; I advise you to suspend your Judgment, because you want Experience. The Devil is a cunning Fowler who absconds when he lays his Snares for the poor Bird: and because he is purely Spiritual, and in effect, one who cannot be felt or perceived by our sensitive Faculties, hence it comes to pass, that when we feel their Motion, and see not the Mover, we are easily induc'd to believe our selves to be at the Springs of these confus'd Agitations. Nay, it is he who wittily contrives to perswade us of it, by furnishing us with subtle Reasons, and secret Sentiments for that purpose. But I say again and again, Fear not, but be valiant amidst the most miserable Perplexities of your troubled Brain, and distress'd and afflicted Carnal Reason. Lift up, and fix the most secret Intentions of your Mind (which imperceptibly shine among so many Clouds) to your *God*: look upon him, and resign your self to him

to him, be immoveable in his Love, and confident in his Fatherly Charity, bear with the Chaſtiſements of theſe Wretches, for, whilſt they moleſt and hammer you, they, in ſpite of themſelves, are forging bright Crowns of Glory for you.

VII. But now to return to the other Practical Rules of true Humility. Could you believe. *Dear Child*, that S. *Auguſtin* with his prodigious Stock of Learning, and Epiſcopal Dignity, could have been ſo humble, that the Learn'd Divine *Gabriel Vaſquez*, compares him in Humility to S. *Francis* of *Aſſiſi*, a Man of little Learning, and in effect no Prieſt? Now be pleas'd to hear the Maxims which this Great Saint impreſs'd on his Mind and Will. Firſt with reſpect to *God* he ſaid, *God worketh many good things in Man, which Man doth not perform in himſelf; but Man doth nothing that is good, which God worketh not, that Man may exert and bring it about.* Obſerve ſtrictly how the Saint acknowledges many good things in himſelf and us all, which *God* bountifully beſtows upon us, without our Concurrence or Merit? And it is *God* himſelf that makes us perform and accompliſh theſe very Works, of which we ſeem to be the Authors. O the great *All* of *God* and the extream *Nothingneſs* of Man! Then when this Holy

St. Auguſtin's *Humility, and ſome of his Maxims.*

Doctor

Doctor conſider'd himſelf, he concluded that *there was no Sin that any man whatſoever could be guilty of, but which he might commit alſo.* And in this Senſe (with reſpect to Poſſibility) one may juſtly call himſelf the greateſt of Sinners, when he conſiders himſelf without Grace (which does not belong to him, and therefore ought to be referred to *God*) and when he judges that all other Men have at leaſt ſome poſſible Grace: and thus he is naturally and of himſelf alone, frailer than any other; and ought to eſteem himſelf ſo, and wiſh to be accounted as ſuch by others. Suppoſe the Soul is fully convinc'd that it does not fall into certain groſs and heinous Offences; then ought it to cry out with the Saint, *O Lord to thy Grace I aſcribe it, that I have avoided all the Evils I have not committed.* As if a Glaſs, which is the moſt frail and brittle thing in the World, was ſo well kept, as never to be ſhatter'd in pieces, whilſt the very Marble moulders away; it could truly ſay, that it was the moſt brittle and frail thing that is, and that its Preſervation is owing to the Care of its Keeper, and not to the Glaſs. So the humble Soul is not blind, neither are its Notices falſe: but if it diſcover that it is alone, it diſtruſts its ſelf more than any other thing. But if it conſiders that *God*

who

who keeps the City, and that dear Redeemer who vouchsafed to be call'd a *Samaritane*, that is, a *Keeper*; O what a deal of Confidence puts it on! O how frankly does it ascribe its Integrity to him! and how far from believing that it so easily fell into those Sins which the Tempter casts in its Teeth! Psal. 121. Joh. 8.

VIII. The truly humble Person behaves himself one way as to the inward, and another way for the most part as the outward, with respect to his Neighbour. When in the bottom of his Soul he discovers himself alone, and only with his own riches, namely Sins, which are already committed or which possibly may be committed, and when he sees his Neighbour repleniſh'd with Gifts which *God* has conferr'd upon him, and with such as he may probably impart (as has been seen in many Robbers and Whores, whom *God* has at last chang'd into Saints) How does he humble and prostrate himself under the Feet of all Men! How much is that Saying of *Thomas a Kempis* verified in such a Soul, *It cannot hurt you to submit to all men; but it will be very prejudicial to prefer your self before any one.* But when an humble Soul discerns what it has of *God* in it; and that it is more than what he has bestow'd upon another, then

How the humble Man behaves himself to his Neighbours in his Thoughts and Actions.

Tho. à Kempis.

it is that it may prefer its greater Gift before its Neighbour's leſſer, and receive obedience from him. And thus a Superior may outwardly act according to his Character, and may command, and allow himſelf to be reſpected and to accept of Obedience and Submiſſion from his Inferiors. And as ſuch may correct his Subject: and as a Maſter, teach, and deſire to be believ'd by his Scholar. But here we muſt keep a good Guard within: for we are liable to a number of miſtakes; and Superiority and Precedency (if we be not watchful to keep our heart by the Grace of *God*) degenerates into Pride: wherefore a low Station is the ſecurer.

An humble Perſon muſt put on an air of Majeſty and holy Pride in reference to the Devil and Sin.

IX. And with relation to Sins and Devils that tempt us, I would have the humble Perſon to put on a holy Pride, or rather, Courage: and not to fear theſe moſt vile and pitiful enemies of our *God*. Daughter, The moſt high omnipotent *God* loves you more than all the Curſed Spirits whatſoever. But if the Creature is as ſtrong as *God* is pleas'd to make him, how ſhould you fear, that *God* your Spouſe would give more ſtrength to theſe abominable proud wretches, than to you a Virgin, conſecrated to his Glory? And as for Sins, which are the Filth and Pollution of your fair Soul, I deſire you, couragiouſly

ouſly to diſdain and ſcorn to turn your Eyes back either upon them, or their Temptations. And as to earthly Creatures, I will have you to know, that you are endued with ſo noble a Soul, and ſuch an eminent Love, that you ſtill diſhonour that, and abaſe this, when you Love any Creature whatſoever, if you love it not in *God*, and for Him, but in it ſelf. Come Dear Child, be not ſo mean as to be diſheartned, ſince *God* has Created you after his own Image: Redeem'd you with his Blood: and deſires you for his Spouſe, and now feeds you with himſelf veil'd in the Holy Sacrament, that afterwards he may give himſelf unveil'd in immortal Glory.

And in reference to the Creatures.

Letter XXVIII.

To a Spiritual Guide.

1. *What ſhould be taught to upright Souls, Maxims to wean them from ſenſible things.* 2. *How God is Honour'd by means of the Theological Virtues: and the Practice of them.* 3. *Wherein Holineſs conſiſts, and the miſtake and Prepoſſeſſion of deſolate Souls clear'd up.* 4. *True Humility and its Conditions.* 5. *Some effects of Raptures and Extacies.*

Sir,

I. YOU may imagine, without any further preamble what ſatisfaction I had in Reading the Account you gave me of theſe good Women's Progreſs in Virtue, of whoſe true Perfection, I was, Bleſs'd be God, the unworthy, tho' wonderful Inſtrument. I can poſitively ſay, that I had none of theſe things in my ſelf which I taught them; but was only a channel whereby the Holy Ghoſt did convey down his Influences to Inſtruct and Inflame theſe pious Virgins: for when the work was once ended, I remain'd with my

my ordinary and deplorable misery and aridity. Sir, Fear not therefore, but prosecute the work vigourously, and draw their Souls exceedingly to a low opinion of themselves, and of every thing created, and to esteem our most high Creator: and not to love themselves, or any thing created, but to love our most amiable *God* with a solid and substantial Love. I call that solid and substantial Love, which consists not in the accidents of Taste, or Spiritual Lights, but in the performance of the perfect practice of Virtue, in overcoming our Senses and Passions, the Devil, and our own Vices, and in a strict observance of the divine, regular and ecclesiastical Precepts, and (as far as 'tis possible) of the Gospel-Counsels and Advices. And in this it is, that the solid, weighty, and substantial part of the true Love of *God* consists: and be assured that Contemplation will not prove very desirable if it do not further our encrease in such matters. The way that my Cross points, is mighty secure. Sir, Be pleas'd to look into it, and cause it to be practis'd, because a deal of Sanctity and Truth is wrapt up in it. Observe, that the farther the Soul departs from sensible Things, it is so much the more secure: seeing the outward and inward Senses are the Country in which the

What a good Director ought to teach Spiritual Persons.

How we ought to draw off our Minds from our inward Senses.

Devil goes to and fro as a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may greedily devour. The same may be said of the Discursive and Sensitive Faculties: for all particular Notices, and all reflex Thoughts being founded on the Fancy and Apprehension (Regions too much expos'd to the Incursions of this cursed Serpent) hence it follows that he who walketh in these Ways, does not as yet travel through Countries that are safe from Cut-throats and Robbers. The more a Soul rests on the general Knowledge of Faith, and willingly adheres to the Dictates thereof, without other particular Illuminations, and when it implicitly loves and adores the unconceivable, invisible and incommprehensible *God*; so much the more secure Sanctuary does it take, and (as a Bird on Wing) scorns the Nets of the infernal Fowlers.

How we should give Honour to God.

II. I use to say that a greater Honour cannot be done to infinite Truth; than to believe in it without other Signs, or without canvassing it with our Inferior Reason, so much the more blind in divine Matters, how much the more it presumes to affect Evidence and Knowledge. As we cannot honour the diffusive and Infinite Mercy of *God* more, than to hope and trust in it without the Benefit of Regals, Caresses, and other Pledges of Illumination. 'Tis enough for me to know that *God* is infinitely

finitely Good and Charitable: that I may truſt in him amidſt all Aridities and Gloominesſ of Spirit. And 'tis enough for me to know, that my *God* was made Man, and hath ſhed his moſt precious Blood for me, and that I wiſh to be his Son, and a Member of that ſacred and myſtical Head *Jeſus*, by Faith and Love; to the end I may juſtly hope for Eternal Happineſs, even on the Brink of Hell, and in the midſt of all the Devils who ſtand open-mouth'd to devour me. And finally I cannot do a greater Honour to the incomprehenſible Eſſence, Goodneſs, Beauty, and Perfection of my *God*, Three and One, than to love him with all my poor Heart, Mind, Soul, and Strength, and That in himſelf, without ſo much as reflecting upon, or having a regard to my own Rewards whether temporal or eternal: but only to love *God* in *God*: and to reverence, ſerve, adore, and offer my cordial Affection to that infinite and moſt charming Goodneſs which reſides in him. Ah my *God*, Ah Omnipotence, Wiſdom, Bounty, Beauty, Glory, Holineſs, and every thing, my God, my God! Thou art ſo lovely in thy ſelf, that all the Seraphims and Saints cannot attain to the loving of thee ſufficiently, or in any degree proportionable to thy Lovelineſs: and ſhall I a poor Wretch,

as thou knoweſt, if I have but one Spark of Love for thee, go about to ſeek other Motives of loving thee, but thy Self? Art not thou then as amiable who haſt created but one Paradiſe, as if thou hadſt created Thouſands of them? Come my Happineſs, Come my Lord, help, and kindle this poor Heart of mine; for it deſires to love thee, even tho' it ſhould be ſent to Hell, or be annihilated by thee.

Wherein Holineſs chiefly conſiſts.

III. Thus true *Holineſs* does methinks conſiſt in three Virtues, practis'd in this following manner, namely, Faith without Signs, Hope without Pledges, and Love without Rewards. Yet, Sir, let your Wiſdom be pleas'd to underſtand me aright, that I mean not to blame Reaſons, good Illuminations, and Miracles for the corroborating of our Faith: or Viſitations Gifts, and Promiſes to confirm our Hope; and Careſſes, Regales, and Union to ſtrengthen our Charity. But my Meaning is, that we ought not to pretend a right to ſuch things, or build upon them: but ought to rely on that which is ſolid and ſubſtantial, which by the Help and Grace of *God* cannot fail us: that is, on Faith which believes without ſeeing of Signs; Hope, which expects without the Pledges of Help: and Charity, which ardently loves its adored *God* without regard

to

to Rewards. And here once for all I must remove the Prejudices and Prepossessions of Those in Dereliction and Aridity, who do nothing but mourn, and cry out that they are abandon'd of *God*, and who turn the Brains of their Directors, desiring of them that Sap of Devotion, which is not in their Power to afford: and who squeeze, waste, and rack their own Brain, that they may extract some sensible and Intellectual Sweetness, whose Vein and Spring our *Lord God* has already stopt for their greater Benefit and Advantage. 'Tis therefore meet to be clearly inform'd, and to know that the Grace of *God* and our Holiness depend not upon this certain kind of Relish and Sweetness, which seems to be the Love of *God*, and yet proves very often but a more refin'd Love of our selves. Alas, I do not always please *God* when I please my self! O how many Prayers, that seem to gratify my Nature, and of which I am fond, are not so very acceptable to *God*. O how many Prayers, in which I have found nothing that pleas'd me, and have gone away humbled and and confounded, which have been well-pleasing to *God* the righteous Judge of all Truths! Great is that Sentence of *Johannes a Cruce*, in one of his *Letters* directed to a Person in such a Condition, who says,

A Mistake of a desolate Soul removed.

Sir,

Sir, You was never in a better Condition than at preſent (when in the mean time deſolate and far from a Spiritual Guide) *becauſe you was never ſo much humbled and ſubdued; and never made ſo little Account of your Self and worldly things: nor was you ever ſo fully perſwaded of your own Wretchedneſs and God's goodneſs: Nor did you ever ſerve him with ſo much Purity, and Self-Denial; and finally never was you ſo far from doing your own Will, or ſeeking your Self, as now. What do you then drive at? What Scheme and Model of Life are you a carving out? Do you perhaps imagine the Service of God to be any other thing, than to abſtain from Evil, to obſerve his Commandments, and to attend, as far as your Strength will allow, on his Holy Service? Seeing you enjoy this, what needs you learn more, or wiſh for other Lights, or ſeek after other Comforts?* Sir, be pleas'd to drink in theſe Maxims, and (if you think fit) to impart my *Letter* to theſe good Servants of *God*, and reconcile them to the Love of Virtue, nay, ſolid Virtues: that they may bear up under the Shocks and Blows of Adverſity, and bid them not doubt in the leaſt, for the Love of *God*, Grace, and the Holy Ghoſt will become their Maſter in Contemplation.

IV. Let

IV. Let your *Humility* be profound, and real, flowing more from the Heart than Tongue. One that is truly humble, is never disquieted to see himself Spiritually poor. He who were heartily perswaded that he deserveth not one Grace or Favour from *God*, as he outwardly confesseth; would not be much troubled or griev'd to see himself want that to which he has no Title, and which he cannot challenge by virtue of an Obligation. If Graces do come, give thanks to *God* who is the Almoner: and love *God* the Giver without minding the Gifts. If *God* takes back his own, that was only given us in Trust: if *God* do not bestow his Charity and Alms, which he is not oblig'd to, and which we do not merit; where's the wrong done us? Of whom can we complain? Nay, let us even be content, and resign'd, and hope amidst our Nakedness and Nothingness: and be careful to love *God* daily more: and then we shall be happier than if we swimm'd in Seas of sweetest Pleasure and Delight, and were in the mean time loving *God* with less Purity, or taken up about our own Concerns. Let us trust in *God*; And let him thrust out every thing which pleaseth us, and he will fill us with that which is well-pleasing to himself. Let us forget our selves

True Humility *and its Conditions.*

ſelves that we may think upon him, and he ſhall never be unmindful of us.

Happy *the Man whoſe Love and pure Deſire,*
Fly to the Author of our Vital Fire.
Rich *is the Breaſt that treaſures up the Lord,*
And covets nothing but his Heav'nly Word.
And he is only Wiſe, *who does believe*
That God has all the Plenty we receive.

The ſeveral Effects of Extaſies.

V. As to our Mother, in my Opinion, is that all goes well with her. As to the new and extraordinary Effects you mention'd, my Mind in ſhort is, That becauſe Extaſies render the Soul more brisk and lively in the higheſt and intellectual Operations, it ſeems to leave the Body: and the more that Spiritual Actions are improv'd; the more do theſe that are natural and animal ſuffer: whence it comes to paſs, that when it retires into it ſelf, it feels a Weakneſs, Wearineſs, and Heavineſs. But becauſe this State (which is the Spiritual Wedding) is the Beginning of Heavenly Glory; hence it comes to paſs, that in reſemblance of Glory (in which the Soul will influence the Body with the Endowments of Agility and Brightneſs, *&c.*) the extatick Soul does even ſometimes in this Life, communicate to the Body the Beginnings and Fore-taſtes of ſuch Gifts; which

which gives Occaſion to feel that Agility, and ſometimes (when the inward Rapture is ſtrong and violent) the Body is lifted up in the Air: and ſometimes that Brightneſs and gliſtering Luſtre is imparted to it, rendring the Extatick Perſons Countenance exceeding fair above their natural Complexion, as in the Caſe of S. *Tereſa*, and many more. Thus much for the Cauſe of the Diverſity of Raptures. *Sir*, be pleas'd to Write to me if any new Occurrence happen, for I have one thing to impart betwixt you and me in a particular and ſecret *Letter:* but now both Time and Paper fail me. *Farewell.*

LETTER

Letter XXIX.

Of Spiritual Perfection.

To a Perſon deſirous of Perfection.

1. *Is prov'd, that Perfection conſiſts in four Points.* 2. *The firſt of theſe is the Knowledge of our Nothingneſs without God: which Knowledge, as likewiſe that of Faith avail nothing, if they advance no further than to mere Speculation and move not the Will.* 3. *Why God abandons Souls to Dereliction.* 4. *In our Want we know perfectly, that every thing comes from God.* 5. *The ſecond Point is, the ardent and lively Knowledge and Eſteem of God: and it is deſcrib'd how all Benefits ought to be own'd to come from him, and yet that we owe Gratitude to the Creatures.*

The Spiritual Life reduc'd to four Points.

I. THE Eſſence of a Spiritual Life, and of Chriſtian Perfection, is reduc'd to two Acts of Knowledge in the Underſtanding (which muſt not be barely Speculative but Practical, and ſolid and ſubſtantial) and to two ſtable, great, and effectual

effectual Affections of the Will: To which all the Exercises of the Inferiour Faculties, and all sort of Mortifications, and Acts of moral Virtues are to be directed as to their proper Ends. But Dear Soul, mark well that I expresly said, that these two sorts of Knowledge ought to be Practical, that is, of force to move the Will to act according to their Dictates. To what purpose would it be, for a Man to be sensible of his mean Birth, and to esteem himself ignoble: if after all he will not treat himself, nor let others use him as such. This Man has not a practical Knowledge that can excite his Will to Action: and so, his Speculative Knowledge makes him not a whit the more truly humble and virtuous; because it is the Province of Christian Virtues to better the Will: and *Peace* was preach'd by the Angels, *to men of good Will.* Luke 2.

The Knowledges of Virtue must be practical.

II. The First Fundamental Knowledge, we ought to be possess'd of, is that which by the force of Faith, makes us to understand the extream Nothingness of the Creatures, and of our selves when we consider both our selves and all things without *God.* And in like manner we must know our own Incapacity of doing Good, without *Him.* And that we are only capable

The first Point is to know the Nothingness of the Creatures without God.

ble of failing, falling, apoſtatizing, and in ſhort, of ruſhing into all kinds of Vices: which are a Nothing of Virtue and Privation of Goodneſs. But O my God! This, even This is our Miſchief, that we frequently ſtop at the Speculative Knowledge of this Truth: for it is an eaſy matter to obtain this, and an unaccountable Ignorance not to know it in ſuch a manner at leaſt. O how often is it with us in this Point as in other Evidences of Faith, which we indeed know, but for all this never put in Practice! Who does not know, that he muſt die, and that he is uncertain *when*, *where*, or *how*? And yet how many are there among us who live as if they knew nothing of it: and as if to die well were not the moſt important Buſineſs of our Life! What Chriſtian does not confeſs that there is an endleſs Duration of Glory and Torments and that we are inceſſantly and ſwiftly flying either to the one or the other? And nevertheleſs how little Pains, do many Chriſtians take to ſhun the horrible Miſeries of the one, or attain the ſublimeſt Degrees in the Happineſs of the other? We know that *Jeſus Chriſt* is very *God* and Man: and that his Life and Paſſion is the true Mirrour and Pattern of Virtues, and of true

A mere Speculative Knowledge of Faith is not ſufficient to Salvation, and ſeveral Inſtances of it are brought.

and

and exalted Holineſs: and that *he that followeth Chriſt walketh not in darkneſs:* and that he who taketh him for his Maſter and reſolveth to imitate him, cannot be miſtaken. And yet indeed, how few are they, who, by cloſely following the Goſpel-Counſels, are rather afraid of being rich than poor? Who is there that rather loves Contempt and Diſgrace, and to undergo the Shame and Perſecution of the World, for the Love of *God* and Virtue; than Honours, Praiſes and Advancements, or to have a Name and be great in the World? Where is the Man that comforts and ſolaces himſelf, and is cheerful under both external and internal Sufferings: and that rather loves Croſſes than Contentments or Spiritual Entertainments and Pleaſures, ſo eagerly long'd for by our covetous and unſatiable Fleſh. Men know that *God* is moſt preſent with us, and with all Creatures; and that his infinite Eſſence dives into the ſecret Receſſes of all things: and that he clearly beholds the moſt abtruſe Corners of our Hearts: and that whitherſoever we go, or in what Place ſoever we abide, we are ſwallowed up in *God.* And yet I pray you, where is that awful Reſpect that we ſhould pay to ſo preſent a Majeſty? Where is that Purity wherewith we ſhould be adorn'd that we

John 8.

may not offend the pure eyes of our God? Where is our Love toward our moſt deſirable Lord, who lodgeth in the bottom of our heart, and who wraps us ſo dearly up in his boſom, and dwelleth in us? Conſider therefore, Deareſt Soul, that it is not enough to underſtand things by a Speculative Knowledge: where a practical and actual one is requir'd.

God reduceth Souls to Dereliction and Impotence, that they may come to learn the practical Knowledge. Of their own Nothingneſe.

III. When therefore it is the Will of our Lord God to make a Soul perfect, and to enrich it with Graces and Favours: on purpoſe that it may not attribute any Grace of God to it ſelf, or become proud, he makes it experiment the vanity of the Creatures, in which it very often finds no ſuccour: and makes it touch as with its hand, its own weakneſs, ignorance, and nothingneſs: wherefore he ſometimes puts it in certain Circumſtances and States wherein it can neither help it ſelf, nor can it find any body who is capable to relieve it; but God alone, on whom it ſhould build all its Confidence. How vaſt a difference is there betwixt the reading of theſe things, the thinking upon them, or the hearing of them deliver'd by others, and the experimental trial of them in us! And this is the reaſon why God puts you ſometimes in theſe circumſtances of inward

ward darkneſs, and ignorance, and (if I may ſo call it) a Spiritual Stupidity: to the end that hereby you may pry into this practical, palpable and and evident Knowledge that you can *do nothing*, and *underſtand nothing:* and that your former Lights and Affections, and the future alſo (if God ſhall vouchſafe you any) are not your riches, nor do they reſult from your induſtry, ſtrength, or diligent application: but from the Mercy of God. Believe me, the Soul is then very ſenſible that every thing belongs to God, When He deprives it of every thing. Who amongſt us knows and deeply reflects, that we have not from our own nature either ſeeing, hearing, nor the motion of one eye-lid, one breath, nor the uſe of any of our Faculties? Which of us is earneſtly thankful for, and juſtly, weighs theſe continual benefits? Suppoſe we wanted any of theſe things, or that Sickneſs had ſuſpended and obſtructed them, then it is we know that they were not ours: and we are put in mind of that Lord to whom they do of right belong, and who gave them, and recals them, and reſtores them to us, as he pleaſes, and as it ſutes with his honour and glory: then we pray him to reſtore them or preſerve them to us.

We know the All-Sufficiency of God from our own defects and weakneſs.

The same holds good in Spiritual things.

IV. It fares the same way with us in internal Graces, the want of which gives us a true sense of our Poverty and Impotence, and of the only riches and Omnipotence of God. When you therefore labour under internal Poverty, Aridity, and desolation (or even other miseries, weakness, and bodily infirmities from without) be not discouraged, nor endeavour to use violence upon your self to to retrieve Sights, Sensation, or pleasures, or to form distinct conceptions of God, or of other spiritual things: because you cannot be the better for it, seeing God will have you to be poor. You must submit to God. If it be his pleasure that you should be destitute, and robb'd and depriv'd of favours, you ought to condescend to be such as he would have you to be. Nor can you ever expect, or meet with truer Riches, than to be wholly and intirely united to the most wise will of God. Abandon therefore your self (as a Prey, that will not stand its ground any longer) in the hands of the divine Providence: That he may purify you as he sees fit, and be glorified in you, and dispose of you, and your Faculties as is most agreeable to his wise and loving disposals. In the mean time grow and advance still more and more in experience, and with more practical Knowledge handle and feel the extreme Nothing-

How a Person ought to demean himself in Dereliction

Nothingneſs of your own Power and Being without God. Contemplate your abſolute incapity of good and extreme poverty and moſt empty Nothingneſs without God. Be nevertheleſs exceeding joyful to ſee your ſelf ſuch; to the end that all the Glory of your ſtrength, being, and every good thing may be aſcribed to your beloved Lord to whom it does of right belong. And that if the divine Majeſty ſhould exalt you to exceeding high Giſts and to the very Choir of Seraphins; you ought to be faithful to him, and not uſurp the leaſt of that Glory and Honour which is wholly due to God. And ſtill keep in mind that your Being, Faculties, Virtues and Gifts belong to God: and that you have no more of your own, but a *Not-Being* of nature, and Sin: which is a privation of Virtue and of Grace. O how finely ſpoke *Laurence Juſtinianus* in a Sentence that was familiar to him! *This is true Knowledge to underſtand that God is All, and that I am Nothing.* And ſometimes he ſaid. *If you would wiſh God to have mercy upon you; think that you of your ſelves, are nothing, and can do nothing.* And this muſt not be a Flaſhy Light of Wit or Fancy: but the eſtabliſh'd Sentiments of our heart, cheriſhed by our Will. And whilſt we govern our ſelves by them,

we ought ſtill to have a holy Diſtruſt of our ſelves, to abandon our ſelves quite, and entertain a filial Love and Confidence in our Omnipotent Lord, who is all Charity, and never forſakes, nor cauſes thoſe to be brought to Confuſion, who put their Truſt in him.

The Second Point of Perfection, and the affectionate Knowledge and Eſteem of God.

V. From this Knowledge we have a very eaſy Paſſage to a Second, namely a moſt high Knowledge (not witty, artificial and diſcurſive only, but ardent, voluntary, and founded on a ſimple and lively Faith) and a mighty Eſteem of our infinite, incomprehenſible, and immenſe God, the Creator, Preſerver, Monarch, and ultimate End of the whole World. As when we take a Proſpect of our ſelves and the Creatures, we ought to know, that of our ſelves we have neither Knowledge, Virtue, Power, Merits, nor ſo much as Being without *God*; ſo when we contemplate *God* with the dim and marvellous Light of Faith (which here upon Earth ſees *God* better than any other Light, that is not beatifical) we ought ſeriouſly to acknowledge that *He* is that infinite All, who involves a Neceſſity in his Being, and for whom it is impoſſible not to be, who cannot fail, nor be liable to Imperfection, Change, Increaſe, Diminution or Variation. And that *God* is not only in-

All the Benefits which the Creatures afford us, we muſt needs refer them to their firſt Cauſe, who is God.

finite

finite in his Being, Power, and Omniſcience, and is infinitely rich, happy and bleſſed in the poſſeſſion of himſelf, nor can he derive any Addition from the Creatures; but is alſo that Being that communicates Being to all Things; that Power which gives us our Powers and Faculties; That Wiſdom which infuſes all our Wiſdom: That immenſe Virtue and Holineſs that cauſes us to be Virtuous: That inexhauſtible Ocean of Grace, that renders us capable and worthy of himſelf, and of enjoying him to all Eternity: and finally, that he is That uncreated Perfection, who can only make his Creatures perfect; and that unconfin'd and unlimited Glory, who can only bleſs and fully ſatisfie to all Eternity the Souls that ſerve, and faithfully Love him. In like manner ought we alſo to underſtand, that all the Benefits, which our Senſe fancies us to have receiv'd from other Creatures, are owed to *God* the firſt Cauſe and Author of all Goodneſs; And that all the Learning, Light, Virtue, Strength, Advantage, and Aſſiſtances, whether outward or inward deriv'd from the Creatures, do truly acknowledge *God* to be their Fountain, Author, and excellent Creator: For which Cauſe we ought to offer the firſt and chiefeſt Love of our Soul to him; and to preſent him with our

Why the Soul on ſome Occaſions, cannot admit of Succour from any Perſon.

moſt obliged Heart for a perpetual Tribute; and to aſcribe all Graces and Favours to him, tho' his Love has convey'd them down to us by means of ſome Creature, which can only benefit and aſſiſt us ſo far as it is inſpir'd and allow'd by *God*. And this is the Reaſon why a Soul is ſometimes engag'd in ſuch Circumſtances, that it cannot find a Creature either in Heaven or on the Earth, that can relieve or effectually help it. Thus the Soul comes to ſee clearly, that a Creature can do as much, know as much, and *will* as much good on our Behalf, as *God* is pleas'd, it ſhould *do*, *know*, or *will*. Hence it is, that if *God* is not pleaſed to eaſe it of any Croſs, in vain ſhould the joint Force of a whole World take the Trouble to bring it about. We ſhould therefore glorify and love our *God* above all things. But becauſe he governs his Creatures by due and convenient Means, (and we plainly ſee, that we are warmed by the means of Fire, and enlightned by means of the Sun, *&c.*) we ought alſo to have recourſe to the Creatures, and to be thankful to thoſe that are our Benefactors. Tho' we muſt ſtill acknowledge that the Creature is as the Inſtrument of the Creator, and that it acts by Virtue of *God*, when it does good. We ought therefore indeed

to

to love the Creatures, but in Subordination to *God* and with respect to him: nor must we on the Account of what Creature soever, offend the most high Creator in the least. O what Wisdom is this! O what Heavenly Knowledge! Reflect seriously upon this: and use these general Rules in particular Actions, and as you see Occasion.

Letter XXX.

1. *Of the Two other Points of Perfection: Of a holy Hatred of our selves, and the Necessity of our being mortified.* 2. *The main Argument for proving of this Necessity; A Short Acccont of the Properties of Sense.* 3. *And the Losses which the Soul sustains by following them.* 4. *How we should love rational Creatures, and how God loves them, and how we ought to imitate him therein.*

I. FROM these two sorts of practical Knowledge of the Understanding, which I have described in my last to you, must arise two great Affections in the Will: but as much as it is easy for me to explain them and for you to understand them, so

What the two Affections of the Will are.

ſo much is the Difficulty to attain to the true Poſſeſſion of them, and firmly to practiſe them: neither can they be purchas'd without the Grace of *God* and the diligent Induſtry of the Soul. The Firſt of theſe Affections is *a Holy Hatred of our ſelves:* The Second, is *an exceeding great Love to God, and our Neighbour, in God and for God.* If I take a narrow View of my ſelf in my ſelf, by the Light of Supernatural Truth that is not darkened by the Senſes or Paſſions, O my *God*! what a Gulf of Miſeries, what a Chaos of Confuſion and Diſorder, what a loathſom Sink of Faults and Vices am I? If I contemplate and conſider my ſelf all alone and without Grace, to what Devil might not I be compar'd? What Miſchief is there that my unbridled Senſes, my looſe Paſſions, my rebellious Body, my haughty Humour, and my Will blinded and quite drunk with peſtiferous and contagious Self-Love, could not commit and be guilty of? If S. *Auguſtin* did ſincerely acknowledge, that there was no ſort of Sin, which any Man could be guilty of, but he might likewiſe commit: You and I miſerable, ignorant, and flagitious Wretches that we are, what ſhall we ſay of our ſelves? What ſhall we think of our ſelves? What ſhall we judge of our ſelves? Now when

The Holy Hatred of our ſelves, and the Motives and Reaſons thereof.

when the Soul takes a narrow View of it ſelf all alone, and ſees it ſelf ſo averſe from Virtue, and prone to abominable and execrable Vice, why ſhould it not hate it ſelf with a perfect Hatred? Were we truly juſt, O how great an Averſion ſhould we have at our own Judgment, which is treacherous and a Contriver of Deluſions; and at our own Will, that opens Hell for us, and our Body, Senſes, and Paſſions, which like Beaſts will have their Paradiſe upon Earth, and induce us to forfeit the true Paradiſe in Heaven! O Dear Soul in God, believe me, theſe are Matters not to be curſorily run over with one or two ſingle Readings, and with a dry and unfruitful Saying, *It is very true:* but you muſt put your hand to work: Woe to me, woe to me, if I, like the *Phariſees*, ſpeak theſe things, and do not practiſe the Truths that I teach. Guard therefore againſt your ſelf, and be not one of your own Flatterers. *Certainly* (ſaid a great Man) *without an aſſiduous and induſtrious Care and Study of Self-Denial and Mortification, let a Man turn himſelf where he will, he can never reap any Profit. The trueſt Rule of all Perfection is this; Be humble, and where-ever thou findeſt thy ſelf, leave thy ſelf there. A real Reſignation with a profound Humility is the ſhorteſt way* Bloſ. Inſtit. Spirit. c. 2.

to

to God: A true and most Joyful and pleasant Life is shelter'd under a real and compleat Mortification. He that continually dies in himself, is still beginning a new Life in God. When any Person struggles with his Sensual Part and Self-Will for the Love of God, and mortifies himself, he does what is more acceptable to God than if he rais'd a great many from Death to Life. O Lord God, from whom all Goodness does descend, inspire us with that holy Rigour and Severity against our selves, which thou hast vouchsaf'd a great many of thy Servants, who by walking in an admirable Suitableness to thy Grace, have taken so much pains to vanquish, and utterly to subdue themselves. Grant, O incomprehensible Sea of Charity, that we may be able exactly to obey that Evangelical Sentence, that

John 12. 25. saith, *He that loveth his Life shall lose it: and he that hateth his Life in this World, shall keep it unto Life eternal. This is the Basis, Foundation, and Abridgment of a Christian Life. This is the Root and Principle of all Virtues. He that would wish to be a Proficient in Learning and Perfection in the School of Christ; let him consider and ponder this Sentence; and stamp it on his Will and set it forth in his Actions.* You should therefore carefully labour to practise this holy Hatred of your self: by mortifying your

your ſelf, as far as upright Light, Obedience or Diſcretion will permit. Endeavour to mortifie theſe Faculties moſt, that cannot receive Damage from Mortificacation. The Body is corruptible, for which Cauſe in mortifying of it, we muſt uſe that Meaſure of Temper and Caution, which the Apoſtle requires, But the Will and Judgment are not Faculties, that are weaken'd, but rather improv'd by Mortification. Juſt ſo great Care muſt be taken to vanquiſh the Paſſions of your Heart, and the Whims of your Brain. And finally ſtudy to bridle and reſtrain your Eyes, Appetite, and Tongue. Rom. 12. 1.

II. And that you may fully and at the Bottom underſtand that we ought to mortifie, oppoſe, and contradict our ſelves; you muſt needs know, that original Sin (in which all Men are born) tho' it be remov'd and waſh'd away by Holy Baptiſm; does nevertheleſs leave its Sting behind it, which is the inordinate Appetite of our Senſes irreconcileable to Reaſon. The Effects of this Senſual Appetite are two: one of them is, to render Virtue and true Spiritual Goodneſs hard and difficult, and the other is a Propenſity to Evil and Vice. Hence it is that we fall pitifully into Sin, if the Grace of *God*, and holy Violence upon our ſelves do not reſcue and ſupport us.

The chief Reaſon why we ſhould mortify our ſelves.

The Property of Sense.

us. It is the Property of our brutish Sense, to know nothing, but present things: and it makes no other distinguishing Mark between Good and Evil, but *to be agreeable or disagreeable to it.* If any thing please, it immediately accounts it good, and desires it. If any thing displease it, then presently does it reckon that bad, and hates, and declines it. But it never considers or weighs, if this be Virtue or Vice, if reasonable or brutish. No more does it reflect upon the bad Consequences of it in the Life to come, provided Sense can enjoy to day, and in this present Life: Hell or no Hell, Paradise or no Paradise, is of little or no Concern with it. And in things that are agreeable, it cannot light upon the reasonable and Virtuous *Medium*, nor is it content with the moderate Use of things lawful: and it neglects wholly and on all Occasions to decline things unlawful: but without having any further Prospect but of its present Satisfaction and Delight, when this our Sense finds an Object agreeable to its brutish Appetite, it takes of it, what it can hold. Wherefore the Holy Ghost did wisely say,

Eccl. 1. *that the Eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the Ear fill'd with Hearing:* thereby denoting the foolish Unrulineſs and unsatiable Greediness of our Senses.

III. Nor

III. Nor does our Evil ſtop here: but our Soul, by reaſon of its ſtrict Union with this immoderate and Senſual Body remains ſo often obſcur'd with its dark Miſts, and is in ſuch a Manner, diſtracted by its Paſſions, and deluded by its Fantaſms, that it alſo falls down from the direct Courſe and Light of Reaſon; and takes up with the Delights of Senſe, and eſteems Virtue too difficult, and Vice too ſoft and ſweet: and thus alſo it runs deſperately to ruine. Self-Love, whereby Man doats on himſelf, and Self-Eſteem, whereby he fondly entertains too high Thoughts of Himſelf and his Endowments, do puſh on our Free-Will and diſtracted Reaſon at ſuch a rate (tho' not irreſiſtibly) that without the effectual Grace of *God*, and an exact Concurrence of the Soul with the Helps of Grace, I know not how we ſhall be ſaved, or how ſhall we be exempt from grievous Sins, and from incurring the danger of Damnation. Great is therefore the the Neceſſity, nay, very great, that is incumbent on us all to ſupplicate firſt of all our *Lord God* that he may ſupply us with his Grace: and then to be careful to avoid all manner of Sin, and to purchaſe, increaſe, and improve in us all ſort of Virtue. But becauſe (as I ſaid) Sin is eaſy to our corrupt Nature, and Virtue is difficult:

The Damage that Men ſuſtain by complying with Senſe.

difficult: from hence it follows, that a great Neceſſity lies upon us to be in a holy Senſe Enemies to our ſelves, and to declare againſt our Senſes, and remain induſtrious and brave in the mortifying of our irregular Appetites, and fallacious Conceits and Apprehenſions. We may effect and bring all this about by ſtopping our own Carreer, when we are in hazard of falling into things eaſy and delightful to us, becauſe they are for the moſt part vicious: and by exciting and forcibly animating our ſelves to reach at things that are difficult to us, and repugnant to our Senſes and Inclination, becauſe theſe are for the moſt part virtuous. This Doctrine muſt be maturely weigh'd, and learn'd: and practis'd with extream Diligence, Manlineſs, Reſolution, and Perſeverance. We muſt needs mortifie our ſelves, while we live here below; and when we are entered into Paradiſe, we ſhall bid adieu to all our Mortifications. *Jeſus* our *God* and Redeemer, compriz'd all I have
Luke 9. ſaid in theſe Words, *He that will come after me; let him deny himſelf, take up his Croſs daily; and follow me.* We muſt be patient; and they that are nice and delicate muſt reſolve upon it. I ſay, that there is no other Road to Paradiſe but this; no, not one.

4. As

4. As to what concerns other rational Creatures, when we understand and know by the above-mention'd practical Knowledge of the Understanding, that without *God* they are nothing, they can do nothing, and that they have not the least grain of Virtue, Knowledge or Merit without him: but that they derive all that good they have, and are, from *God*, in *God*, and in order to him. when (I say) we are convinc'd of this; we shall love them as the Children of our *God*, created and redeem'd by him: and we shall love them in *God*, *in whom they live, move, and have their Being*, as the Apostle expresseth it. And we shall wish well to them with a virtuous Love of Charity with respect to *God* himself, and for his Glory. We shall wish ill to no Man, we shall speak ill of no Man: we shall by no means wrong any Man: nor at any time envy or be griev'd at their good, nor hinder it: But we shall rather wish that our Lord may bless, prosper and do them all manner of good in their Body, and much more in their Soul: both in time, and much more in Eternity. We shall therefore love all Creatures, but as belonging to *God*, and for *God*: that is for His Love and Glory. Yet we must not love, nor approve of, and much less imitate

With what manner of Love we ought to love reasonable Creatures.

Acts 17. 28.

Yet we must not love their Faults.

imitate their Vices and Sins. Our Lord has no Share in such Abominations, no more should we bear any part in them. It is a very remarkable Doctrine (and I pray you, to consider it duly and reflect on the Words of it) that *our Soul was created after the Image and Similitude of God:* and should therefore labour Day and Night to resemble him, and preserve his Image pure and beautiful. Our *Lord God* loveth his Creatures; but he bears no Affection to their Sins. The Wise Man said, *O Lord thou lovest all things that are: and thou hatest nothing that thou hast created. God* has created all Natures, and every thing that hath Being: but he did neither create nor produce Sin, which has no Being, but is a want of Virtue, and of Righteousness. 'Tis not therefore lawful for a Soul, that wishes to resemble the Image of *God*, to hate the Creatures: as it is on the other side, equally unlawful to let Sin enter its Affection or Will. But observe, that *God* loveth his Creatures in himself, and loveth them by loving himself; and for his own Glory: Let therefore the Soul that desires to resemble *God*, love the Creatures in *God*, and for his Glory: and that purely, and without Self-Interest. Let it love them by desiring their real good, and by helping them, as much as it can in Reason

Wisd. 11. 24.

How God loves his Creatures, and how we ought to imitate him.

and

and Equity: as *God* loves his Creatures to make them the better for it (providing they will not resist by sinning, and by following the Swing of their own Will) and as he loves them without regard to his own Interest: for the Salvation of a Soul adds nothing to *God*'s Power, Riches, or Happiness; nor does it abate from his Felicity, if it is damned. And how much has *God* done, how much Pains has the *Word made Man* taken for the Salvation of Mankind! Don't you now perceive how pure the Love of *God* is? Observe also, that he does some good even to his Enemies, nay even to the Devils and damned, who tho' he chastises them severely because he is just; yet he punishes them beneath their Deserts, and maintains them in the Being which he first gave them. But who can ever set forth that immense Ocean of Glory, that he has laid up in Heaven for his Elect, and those who love him? O how justly did the Apostle say, that *Eye hath not seen nor Ear heard, nor hath it enter'd the heart of man to consider what things God hath laid up for those that love him! Consider this seriously.*

LETTER XXXI.

1. *The Second Affection of the Will is an extream Love and Esteem for God.* 2. *How God loves himself, and the Mystery of the Blessed Trinity describ'd.* 4. *Two Ways of Loving God are laid down, and the First is for the great Benefits, which we receive from him:* 5. *Whereof the principal ones are enumerated.* 6. *&* 7. *The Second Way is to love God purely in himself and for himself, without any other regard to things created: and this way is described.*

The Fourth Point concerning Christian Perfection, and the great Esteem and Love that we owe to God above all things.

I. I desire to draw to a Close of this Subject, which makes me immediately come to the Declaration of the Fourth Point. The Second Affection of the Will (which is the sublimest of all the Points) is an exceeding great Love toward *God* above all things. Now to make you fully understand this Affection, in which all Goodness consists, and which is essential Perfection it self, I must needs repeat that Rule, which I mention'd in my last, and enter deeper into the Matter to illustrate it more exactly. Our Soul was created after the Image and Likeness of *God*. This Image and Resemblance

was

was deform'd, and disfigur'd by Sin: it therefore becomes the Soul to labour Day and Night to recover this Assimilation with *God* a-fresh, and to become again the pure and true Image of its Creator. The Perfection of a Soul consists in nothing else, but in being renew'd, restor'd, and reduc'd to the perfect Image and Similitude of *God:* who is *super-essential*, infinite, uncreated, and Eternal Perfection. We shall now here take into our Consideration, how *God* loveth himself: and we must after this manner (by the Grace of *God*) endeavour continually to aim at Assimilation to Him.

What the Essential Perfection of a Soul is.

II. Our most high *Lord God*, from Eternity, and before all Ages began, and that still unchangeably, knows, and perfectly and intirely comprehends himself by his infinite Understanding (and his Intellect is not a Faculty like ours, but is the very infinite Essence of *God:*) and he thereby begets his Eternal Word, who is the lively, substantial, and expres Image of the Father. And the Father communicates the very same Divinity or divine Nature to the infinite Word or Son: therefore tho' they are two Persons, yet they are but one God, because the Godhead is one, and consequently our God is One. But this Great God by comprehending

Concerning the profound Mystery of the Trinity. How the Word is begotten.

hending himſelf Perfectly; ſees that he is immenſe, unbounded, intire and infinite Goodneſs and Perfection. And becauſe Goodneſs and Perfection are amiable: it follows that God knows himſelf to be worthy of Love; in as much as he is conſcious of his own Goodneſs. And becauſe God ſees himſelf to be infinitely Good; he therefore ſees himſelf to deſerve infinite Love. And becauſe God is infinite Juſtice, he ſeeing that it is the height of Juſtice and Equity, nay, rather neceſſity, that an Infinite Good ſhould be loved with infinite Love; the conſequence is, that the Father and the Word, two Perſons and One God do mutually love one another with an infinite, eternal, inceſſant and unchangeable Love: for God being eternally good, juſt, and amiable; he muſt alſo love himſelf eternally: hence God's Love to himſelf, is likewiſe eternal, as the Father and the Son are ſo: and this Love is the Holy Ghoſt. Neither is this Love accidental, but moſt ſubſtantial: which, in that it does not differ in its Nature, nor is diſtinguiſhed from that of the Father or Word (who breath that Omnipotent Spirit, and by ſo doing communicate to it the ſame divine Nature and Eſſence, which is indiviſible and One in Three Perſons) it follows from this that he

The Production of the Holy Ghoſt.

he is *God*, as the Father and the Word are. Therefore these Three excellent Persons the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have one and the same individual, *unmultiplicable* and indivisible God-head, and one and the same Nature, Essence, Omnipotence and Perfection: therefore we adore One God in the Perfect Trinity of Persons.

The Unity of the Divine Essence.

III. I allow that these things cannot be perfectly understood by you, or me, nor by any Man living, in this World, where we are surrounded with the Veils and dark Mists of gross Fantasms and Imaginations, which represent things to us after a corporeal manner, tho' they be most Spiritual, and in effect, widely distant from our Conceptions. However, I thought fit to speak briefly upon the profound Mystery of the incomprehensible Trinity: because it is a more excellent thing to know, tho' it were but a little of that Deep and Excellent Mystery, and to be ravish'd with it, than to understand other things to Perfection: seeing all other things fall infinitely short of that excellent and eternally adorable *God*, Three in Person and One in Essence. Besides, I have spoken of it upon the Account of the large Advantages I may draw from it for the Benefit of your Soul, and that I might

'Tis a great Advantage to know, tho' but a little of this sublime Mystery, and to have a great Affection for it.

inform you what Original it must resemble.

Two ways of Loving God, the First is for the Benefits which we have received.

IV. The Love of *God* is of two kinds: Some Souls love *God* because of the Great, exceeding and continual Benefits they have received: and which they receive every Moment (and indeed every Breath we draw is *God*'s Benefit) and they love him also for the future good things, which they desire and expect to obtain from that immense and uncreated Love, which is *God*. Who being infinite Goodness, is never weary in doing Good and in pouring down his Benefits upon all his Creatures. Happy the Man who puts his Trust in *God*, and abandons himself in him, and enlarges his Heart to his Grace! Bless'd is the Soul, that suffers it self to be govern'd by its Gracious Lord! If the *Will of Man* (saith St. *Thomas*) *was only mov'd by God, it would never be moved to Evil.* But it makes a bad Use of the Liberty which *God* has given it, and will be guided by its own Measures, and therefore falls into Sin. But I return to the Purpose.

Concerning God's Benefits.

V. The Love, that takes its Rise from the Consideration of *God*'s past, present, or even future Benefits expected by a loving Soul, is good and sincere Love. And it becomes you to meditate, reflect and

and reaſon much on this, for it contains a Collection of many choice Conſiderations: which may be ſaid to be innumerable, ſeeing the Favours, Graces and Benefits which we receive, and are capable of receiving from *God*, are without Number. The Sum of all *God*'s Benefits is alſo wrapt up here, namely, the Incarnation, Life, Doctrine, Holineſs, the Paſſion, Death, Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion of the Eternal Word *made Man* for us. As alſo the Sacraments inſtituted by our Merciful Redeemer, are moſt valuable Benefits: and Sanctifying Grace, that renders us acceptable to *God*, and which was purchas'd for us with the Sufferings and Blood of *Jeſus:* and finally his Celeſtial and immortal Glory, which we hope to obtain through the Merits of our Saviour, and the ineffable Mercy of *God*, if we yield a due Obedience to his Holy Commandments. The deep and ſerious Conſideration of theſe things (whether it be by Meditation or Contemplation) is undoubtedly of mighty Uſe to kindle and increaſe the Holy Flame of Love.

The ſecond way, is to love God *in himſelf and for himſelf, purely and without any regard to the Creatures.*

VI. But there is another very ſublime Way of Loving *God*, which a Soul (after it is well exercis'd in the other immediately ſpoken of) may attain to by the Aſſiſtance of *God*'s Grace. A Soul therefore, that

that has at divers times been purged by *God* with ſeveral Diſpenſations of Trials, Croſſes, and Sufferings, both from without and within: and which has been one while brighten'd with ſeveral Illuminations, and another while purified with divers Clouds of Darkneſs, one while kindled with many Affections, and another while tried in divers Temptations; in the end arrives at a marvellous Diſengagement, not only from all other Earthly Creatures, but even from its own Body, and from it ſelf, and its very Spiritual Intereſts and Concerns, and from its own Lights, Satisfactions, Sentiments, Pretenſions and Deſires. A Perſon thus elevated above every thing created, comes by the force of Faith to a very deep Knowledge of the infinite Lovelineſs of *God* in himſelf, and without the Acceſſion of any Creature. And he ſeeth without ſeeing (becauſe he ſees by believing) that the moſt high *God* Three and One, is the incomprehenſible and immenſe Ocean of all Goodneſs and Lovelineſs; and that he contains all ſort of Goodneſs, and by his unſpeakable Infiniteneſs, does infinitely ſurpaſs all Things. This Soul perceives, that the high *God* by beholding himſelf, even before he had created the World, from all Eternity ſaw that he deſerv'd an infinite

infinite Love in himſelf and for himſelf: whereby he lov'd himſelf infinitely. And he only is the true Cauſe of his exceeding Love to himſelf: For he is that Chiefeſt Good which is immenſe and greatly to be Loved; therefore a perfect Soul knowing *God* with this Light, loves him with a moſt pure and noble Love, that is actually diſengaged from all Selfiſh Intereſt of what kind ſoever, and from any Claim or Regard to it ſelf. And it loves its *God* at all times and in every place, without looking to outward or inward Accidents or Events, and without either reflecting on it ſelf, or the Condition, or Rank it is in: but only regards at all times, in every place and in each thing its incomprehenſible Creator and Chiefeſt Good; and continually ſends forth an ardent Affection for him: becauſe Faith always teaches it that *God* is infinitely amiable in himſelf. And becauſe this Soul knows that an infinite Love is ſuitable to *God* who is infinite Goodneſs: and becauſe it is ſenſible that it is not capable thereof, it at leaſt ſtrives (with the Grace of *God*) to love him with as much Purity, Intenſeneſs and Fervence as it is capable of, for it is ſatisfied that tho' it love him never ſo much, yet it ſtill falls ſhort of what is due to him. Nay, the more it loves him,

him, the more does it know him to be amiable. Hence it comes to pass, that this is the Charming Cross of this Soul, namely, to see it self swallowed up in so boundless Charity, and not be able to love it without Measure. Yet nevertheless it loves as much as it is able, or is capable of; and slips no Occasions of Loving; because it sees its *God* to be always infinite amiable.

How this divine Love consists with the acknowledgment of God's Benefits.

VII. It then immediately, in a most general and pure manner discerns, in this Abyss of the amiable God-head, the Deluge of *God*'s Benefits: and the most excellent and best of them all, its Lord made Man, and it loves all Benefits in *God*; but does not love *God* merely for his Benefits: because it would, if possible, love him infinitely, tho' he should never confer any of his Benefits upon it. So far is this Soul disengag'd from all Interest and Propriety of its own: and so far does it see that *God*, by being *God*, is infinitely amiable, without any Possibility of Addition or Diminution in him, who is all Goodness, and infinitely excels every good Thing.

How the Soul becomes like to God by this way of Loving him.

VIII. Thus it is that the Soul is raised to the Similitude of God, and becomes his admirable Image. Because God does incessantly, unchangeably and eternally,

eternally; contemplate, comprehend, and behold himself: and thus eternally begets the Infinite Conception or Word, which is his lively and con-substantial uncreated Image. And by continually admiring himself he continually loves himself: and is loved, in proportion to his Merits, with an infinite Love: whereby he continually breaths the Holy Spirit, very *God*, and the Love, Complacence, and Joy of *God*. So the perfect Soul studies, with the Assistance and Influence of Grace to enjoy an almost continual Presence of *God* (in pure Faith, and without Images) after a most Spiritual and very Internal Manner. And thus heartily loves its most present *God* with an uninterrupted and indefatigable Affection. Do you therefore perceive the Assimilation? 1. *God* contemplates, and is present to himself: and it still looks upon *God*, and has him present, as far as it is possible in this Life amidst the Miseries of our Body, which clog, and fetter down the Soul. 2. *God* sees in himself all Creatures that are or can be created: and knows that he is in all things. And it sees or rather believes its *God* to be in every thing, and all things in him, and him to be above all things. 3. *God* loves himself,

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2.

3.

himſelf, becauſe he is *That which Is*; and is infinite Goodneſs and Lovelineſs: and he is the true Cauſe of his being amiable; nor does his Amiableneſs take its Riſe from any of his Creatures. And a Perſon thus Diſpos'd loves God becauſe he is what he is; nor needs he any other Conſideration for ſo doing but this, *God is God.* Becauſe this contains Immenſity, Infinity, incomprehenſibility of Goodneſs, and endleſs A-

4. miableneſs. 4. God loves all the Creatures in himſelf, and out of his good Will and Pleaſure confers on them all the good they are capable of. And it loves all God's Creatures in him, and wiſhes them all the good convenient

5. for them. 5. And it is exceeding glad at their good, as God infinitely rejoices in the good, he does to his Crea-

6. tures. 6. *God* does good to all, nor can he, or is it poſſible for him, to do Miſchief, that really is ſo, to any, for the very Puniſhment he inflicts on the damned is a good thing in that it is Juſtice. And this Soul does good to as many as it can or is bound to benefit, and wiſhes well to every body: nor does it really wrong, or do Miſchief to any, becauſe by the Grace of *God* it never

deals

deals unjuſtly with its Neghbours. 7. And finally, *God* created all things, preſerves, changes, eſtabliſhes, and acts for his own Glory: becauſe he is the moſt univerſal firſt Principle and ultimate Reſort of all things that are, or that can be created. And this Soul orders both it ſelf and all that belongs to it, to this ultimate and only End of the Glory, Pleaſure and Content of *God*. Theſe Leſſons require a mature and repeated Conſideration, and a perſevering and ſteady Practice. May our *Lord Jeſus* give you Light to underſtand them and Strength to put them in Execution. 7.

To

To a Religious Lady.

1. *Love and Hatred are the Roots and Springs of Humane Actions: the Deluſions in theſe two Affections.* 2. *Of Sympathy and Antipathy, and the bad Effects, that they may breed in Societies.* 3. *How we ſhould love our Neighbour.* 4. *And how Sympathies and Antipathies ſhould be manag'd.* 5. *Some Maxims to that Purpoſe.* 6. *How theſe who have undertaken a devout Life ſhould carry themſelves when in Want or pinching Circumſtances.* 7. *How they ought to check their Inclinations.* 8. *And how they may reſiſt Scruples concerning Confeſſion.* 9. *And what their Deportment ought to be amidſt their Darkneſs, Wandrings and Diſtractions in time of Mental Prayer.*

The Neceſſity we are under to watch over the two principal Affections, Love and Hatred.

I. THE moſt accurate Diligence and continual Watchfulneſs of a Soul that earneſtly deſires to glorifie and love its *God*, and to render it ſelf acceptable to him, and conſequently to be ſaved; ought to be employ'd about the Management and Cuſtody of two of our Affections, which are the Root of every other Motion

Motion and Affection in Man: and these are *Love* and *Hatred.* The most hidden Secret not only of a religious, but also of a Spiritual, Christian and Reasonable Life, is reduc'd to these two Things: *To know how to Love that which ought to be loved, and in the manner that it ought to be loved; and how to hate what ought to be hated, and that in a due manner.* There are many things both within and without us, which clash with this Uprightness of innocent *Love* and *Hatred*; and which delude, betray, and draw us, to love what we ought not, or to let our Affections run out extravagantly after that which we ought to love discreetly. And on the other side we are induc'd to hate what ought not to be hated: or in a manner that suits not with real Virtue. And we sometimes forbear the Loving of that which we have reason to Love; or the hating of that which we ought to hate. 'Tis agreed on at all hands, that Good is lovely, and Evil is hateful: but how oft do we suffer our selves to be deluded by apparent Goods and Evils under the Colour and Disguise of true and real ones! And it can hardly be told into how many Miseries, Sins and Punishments we fall, because of these very important Defects and

Mistakes in the Government of these two Passions.

God is the only and real Good, and Virtue that leads us to him.

Over-ſights. We own that *God* is the chief, ſole, true and infinite Good, and that which is only able to ſatisfie the vaſt Appetite and Deſire of our Soul: and that the true Good that leads us to this uncreated Goodneſs, is Virtue: and yet how few of us love this our higheſt, ultimate, bleſſed and infinite Goodneſs! And alas, how few of us love, and earneſtly labour to obtain theſe true Chriſtian Virtues, and the Grace of *God*, the only Good Means, that carry us to the ultimate Good of Happineſs! We confeſs, that the only true and extream Evil to be regrated, is to offend and loſe *God:* and that Sin is the Occaſion why we loſe and offend the *ſuper-ſubſtantial* and eternal Goodneſs: and why we ſo faintly and indifferently carry on the War againſt our Vices, irregular Paſſions and fallacious Apprehenſions, and againſt the falſe Maxims of the World ingrain'd in us, which are the Roots of ſo many Sins; inſomuch that our Routs, Defeats, and Falls do commonly exceed our Victories and Triumphs.

Sin is the only Evil, which makes us loſe God.

II. But among the Things that hurry us on to immoderate *Love* or *Hatred* (and eſpecially in reference to our Neighbours) two of them are within us, which want to be duly and ſtrictly examin'd into

and

and corrected. One is *Sympathy* and the other *Antipathy*. The first draws us to Love insensibly and before we are aware: and the second sows certain hidden and subtle Aversions, that are able to prejudice and incline us to Hatred. From whence it comes to pass, that if we have any Sympathy, or natural Inclination to any Person; O how easily suffer we our selves to be wheedled and drawn in by that natural Affection before we are aware of it: and we love too much, and insnare our selves, and are very oft so closely entangled, that we thereby contract many Distempers, and such ones, which hardly admit of a seasonable and effectual Cure! O how much does this subtil Venom prevail, and secretly and insensibly defile and infect us! As in Lingering Fevers that are not easily known untill they come to such a height, that when clearly discover'd; they can be hardly cur'd. It is from this, Dear Mother, that the particular Friendships and Affections draw their Extraction, which are the secret Moths, that gnaw and tear Charity in pieces, so much due to all the Society in general, and to each Member of it in particular. O how oft do we neglect the good of the whole meerly to gratifie, and promote the Interest of one

How Sympathy and Antipathy act in us.

The Difficulty of knowing their Motions.

Their bad Effects in religious Cases.

Friend or Companion, and we give our favourable Votes for the Advancement of one, not becauſe that Perſon is better, but becauſe he is dearer to us, not becauſe he is fitteſt, but more proper for the compaſſing of our Deſigns! O how true is it, that one who adheres too much to one ſingle Perſon, and beſtows his Love that way; does very oft forſake and turn his back on many! We are obliged, Dear Mother, to love all Men, for the Love of that *God*, whoſe Creatures both they and we are, who loveth all Men with the pureſt and unexpreſſible Love. If therefore, Dear Mother, You, and I, and all Chriſtians do not inure our ſelves to this univerſal Charity, and if we bear too much Affection to one: Suppoſe that Perſon to be offended by another, we ſide with our Friend, and are very apt to fall into Grudge, Animoſities, Detractions, Averſions, Hatred, and into bad Practices and Deſigns againſt him who hath offended the Perſon whom we love. Alas, this ſo commonly happens, that it were loſt Labour to prove it at large.

General Goods are more perfect than Particular Ones.

III. *Good* (ſaith the learned Divine S. *Dionyſius Areopagita*) *is ſo much the more Holy, the more univerſal that it be.* Hence it is, that the more that good Souls grow perfect and Spiritual, and are diſengag'd from

from their Senſes, ſo much the more do they underſtand and love things in general: for Senſe is only capable of particular Objects; therefore Carnal and Worldly Men ſtill lie buried in particular and corporeal things, and cannot be rais'd to the Conſideration of the purer Virtues, and to *God* who is the moſt univerſal of all Goods. And this is the Reaſon alſo, why theſe mean and narrow Souls love this or that Neighbour, and upon every light Occaſion break Communion with others. Our Love and Charity ought not to be a natural and confin'd Affection, but ſuper-natural, and of ſuch Extent, as to embrace and receive all the World. And tho' it may conſiſt with Charity to love one Perſon more than another (for the juſt Reaſons given by S. *Thomas Aquinas*, which I ſhall not ſet down here, to avoid Tediouſneſs) yet One ought never to hate an indifferent Perſon, out of Affection to his Friend. Let this then be our Standard, Never to ground our Love barely on natural things, as upon Birth, Beauty, Gracefulneſs, or Talents: nor on Benefits, Hopes, Favours, or Reſpect: nor, in ſhort, on other Earthly, Worldly, Humane, frail and frivolous Things: but let us rather found it on theſe things that can never fail or diſappoint us, as

transitory things do. My Neighbour (untill he after Death be condemned to Hell) never ceases to be God's Creature, to be redeem'd by the Son of God made Man, to be capable of being some time or other justified by the Grace of the Holy Ghost: and finally fit to be saved, and number'd amongst the Elect. Therefore altho' my Neighbour should appear never so wicked or wretched in my Eyes, I ought not, nor can I lawfully hate him: because I know not what God may have decreed concerning Him: and I should hope the best of all Men, that the Mercy of God will save them: whereas I must with a profound Humility entertain an apprehensive Concern for my self, yet never so as to run into Despair or be distrustful of God.

IV. Are you therefore satisfied how much it concerns you to be informed about these weighty Points of *Love* and *Hatred*? But that you may prevent these Disorders flowing from Sympathies and Antipathies; consider this Similitude. Imagine to your self, a River running in a Plain, and cutting it in two; yet in such a manner as that the Plain on one Side is a little lower than the River, and somewhat higher on the other: and that both these Fields wanted to be moderately watered

How to moderate Sympathy and Antipathy.

tered. The River would diffuſe ſo much Water towards the lower Side, as to bath and ſoak the Corn-Ground too much, but would not vent one drop on the other Side, and ſo this Field would become parch'd and dry. 'Tis therefore expedient to fence it with Banks and Bulwarks on that Side to ſtop the too violent Courſe of the Stream, and to open Canals on the other Side, and force the Water to run that way. This is a Repreſentation of what we ought to do. Providing our Sympathy runs too diffuſely toward any Perſon, Office, or Riches, or be it what Creature ſoever, let us raiſe Fences, ſtop the Current, and mortifie our ſelves. But if we feel an Averſion or Antipathy at any other Creature or Office, let us even open Canals, and uſe Violence upon our froward and rebellious Inclination, and inſult, humble and ſubdue our Paſſions for the Love of God. A good Muſician, if he perceives that one String of his Inſtrument is too high tun'd; he ſlackens it, and takes it down, and if another be too low, he ſcrews it up. So ought we to tune, and orderly diſpoſe and adjuſt the Diſcords and Diſorders of our Affections and Senſes: by making uſe of the Light of our Reaſon, and much more of that of

Faith, and by exerting the Liberty of our Free-Will ſtrengthen'd and perfected by Charity. Let us ſlacken what is too much bended, and ſcrew up what is too ſlack.

Let God have the First Place, and the Soul the Second.

V. But your main Duty is to prefer *God* before every thing created or that can be created, and before your ſelf, and to put your Soul in the ſecond Place, by preferring its Good and Virtue before all the reſt of the World. 'Tis a familiar Saying of mine, *Loſe all, but loſe not God.* And as to the other Point *Chriſt* our *Lord*

Matth. 16. ſpeaks clearly, when he ſaith, *What doth it avail a man if he gain the whole world, and loſe his own Soul?* I would not tell one jocoſe Lye to ranſom my Father or Mother from Hell, ſuppoſe they were there, which I do not believe. I would wiſh to ſave the whole World with my Blood: but I would not commit one ſmall conſiderate Sin, to convert all the Infidels, or to ſave the whole World. Dear Mother, you muſt lay theſe Propoſitions to Heart, and ſtrive againſt your natural Inclination, that is too full of reſpect and needleſly timorous. You would not diſpleaſe any body, but pleaſe all. Altho'

Gal. 1. 10. S. *Paul* ſaid, *If I yet pleaſed Men, I ſhould not be the Servant of Chriſt.* And *David* a-

Pſ. 53. 5. verr'd that God will *break the bones of them*

them who pleaſe men: and this is meant, when by pleaſing of Men, we diſpleaſe God, which you ſay to have been ſometimes your Caſe. Alas Mother, alas Mother, who muſt judge you, whether is it God or Men? Conſider this duly, and diſentangle your ſelf even from theſe Snares of Humane Reſpect, and from your Self-Love, which make you to boggle ſo much at the preſent frivolous Diſpleaſures: and leave you not to think on the future Diſpleaſures of another Life, that are truly moſt tremendous.

VI. As to your Circumſtances in your Retreat, and as to your Relation's Averſeneſs to anſwer you, what they owe you, is no matter of wonder to me, for the Holy Goſpel tells us, *that a mans foes ſhall be they of his own houſhold:* and eſpecially in Matters of Intereſt, the Poiſon and Plague of the World: neither would I have you to be troubled at it; for he who vows Poverty, muſt love and deſire that great Virtue; and muſt be content to bring down his Thoughts to it, otherwiſe he ſhall be poor only for Formality's ſake. *Woe* (ſaid one of S. *Philip Neris*'s Diſciples) *woe to that man who wanteth nothing in this world.* But if you tell me that you have need of it for the Services and Offices that concern you, and that they cannot Mat. 10. 36.

The real Neceſſity that we are under, is to love God *and obey his Will.*

cannot be perform'd without Money; I anſwer, that no other Neceſſity is impos'd on you, but to love God, and to obey his holy Will. As to all other things if they can be effected, do them, if not, be content. Oh (you will tell me) I am aſham'd of it. And I ſay let us take this Shame cheerfully: and let us unite it to the ignominious Diſhonours ſuffered by our true *God*, our Saviour and Maſter in his being moſt diſgracefully cloath'd like a Fool, in his Nakedneſs at the Pillar, and being crucified betwixt two vile Thieves. Alas, Dear Mother, how hard does this Shame appear to our Pride! O how much does this Thought ſtun us, *What will men ſay of us!* O my God, who will remove our Prejudices, and teach us, that there is no greater Honour, than to accompany the only begotten Son of the Moſt High in his Poverty, Sufferings, and in his Diſparagement and Infamies. In ſhort, be not troubled or diſquieted: and take ſo much of this World as God beſtows upon you, and not what your Senſe craves, or the Reaſon of your too Earthly Inclination, not ſufficiently illuſtrated with the Light and the Dictates of Faith, that are to be preferr'd before the fooliſh Darkneſs of Nature.

It is honourable to follow and imitate Chriſt.

VII. In

VII. In relation to your too brisk Nature, ſtudy by all means to mortifie and repreſs its immoderate Motions. A skilful Rider holds the Bridle in his hand on purpoſe to check the unruly Courſes of his Horſe. So the Soul muſt make uſe of its Free-Will to curb and keep in the Extravagance of the brutiſh and ſenſitive Part. Lay to heart this great Sentence and Maxim of S. *Dominic*, and uſe it as you have Occaſion. *One who could get the abſolute Maſtery over his Paſſions, would be maſter of the world. But you muſt reſolve upon it either to uſe them hardly or they will abuſe and oppreſs you. But remember that it is better to be the hammer than the Anvil.* The Holy Man's Opinion is, That 'tis better to chaſtiſe your Paſſions, than to ſuffer them to ſhake, and tyrannize over you. Dear Mother, there is no more time for Words, nor for meer good Wiſhes, or ſingle Intentions, but for firm Reſolutions, and Deeds, for this Life paſſeth away, and Death comes on a-pace, and Eternity awaits us. Let us conſider, That he who neglects Opportunities, does not only loſe flying and tranſitory Time, but an immoveable and endleſs Eternity alſo. Oh this Eternity, this Eternity, if well underſtood and conſider'd would free our Hearts from Indifferency!

Our Natural Vivacity and Forwardneſs ought to be repreſs'd by our Free-Will.

He who loſeth Time, loſeth both it and Eternity.

rency! O my God! are we ſo anxiouſly concern'd about this puft of periſhing Life; and yet never think on Eternity?

VIII. As concerning your Confeſſions, I frankly adviſe you to be eaſy. And I pray you, do you expect that Angels ſhould ſpeak to you? Having the Aſſurance of virtuous Directors, and of Men who fear God, what would you wiſh more? But you perhaps want Revelations. But who can aſſure you after all, that they are from Heaven or from the Devil, who may transfigure himſelf to deceive you? Nay, Compoſe your ſelf I beſeech you, and conſider that this is a Trap of the Devil's contriving, to hold you cloſe in theſe idle Thoughts, vain Fears and ſottiſh Scruples: and in the mean while makes you loſe that Time, which you might beſtow upon the nobler Thoughts of Virtue, and the obtaining of the ſacred Love of God. Caſt all your paſt Life into the loving Wounds and Blood of your ſweet Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*: and reſolve to amend the remaining Part thereof: and put your Hand to the work, not regarding the faint Inſufficiency of your own Strength; but the Omnipotent Love and Mercy of God, who is ſo earneſt for your Perfection:

and

and for this only End and Purpose, has call'd you to a religious Life.

IX. As to the Darkness and Confusions that possess your Brain whilst you are in Meditation: I say in the First Place, That he who does not mortify himself, and bridle and keep in his Senses all Day long, cannot be well qualified for Recollection and Retreat in the short time that he bestows on Meditation. When the Sea is strongly beaten and toss'd with a raging and impetuous Wind; the tempestuous Storm and Commotions of the Waters do not immediately cease upon the calming of the Wind. So if we all Day long beat our Brains with thousands of Toys, petty Business, News, Passions, Curiosities, unprofitable Discourses, and other impertinent Trifles of this kind; how should we think it strange if we meet with Imaginations, Confusion, and Miseries in the Time of Prayer? 'Tis therefore necessary that you begin to cut off a great many Shoots, Sprigs and superfluous Branches from the Vine, that is, that you apply your self with all your Heart and Will to serve and love your immense God, who is worthy of infinite Service and Love: and that you value all other Affairs, Accidents, Honour, Health

The Occasion of the Mind's Confusion in Prayer, and how it concerns us to mortifie our Senses.

We ought to entertain a very ſmall Opinion of every thing Created.

Health and Life it ſelf, nay all the World as a ſmall and contemptible Grain of Sand, if laid in the Balance with this incomparable Treaſure of Loving God, and of pleaſing this moſt Sovereign Monarch, Creator, and total Glory of thoſe who ſerve and Love him: and for whom it is a Happineſs to ſpend a thouſand Lives; if it were poſſible we could have ſo many. And as to Prayer, give it not over, but endeavour to repoſe on Faith with an internal and profound Attention of Spirit; and without any Figure or Repreſentation, in thy neareſt Approaches to the Preſence of God, Three in Perſon and one in Eſſence: who is moſt intimately preſent in the Center, Bottom, and Subſtance of your Soul. And when your Thoughts wander; as ſoon as you take notice of it, return to this Sovereign Preſence of God; be always ſure to return without being wearie or tired with this Exerciſe: and be pleas'd to continue thus adoring and heartily loving your chiefeſt Good, and humbling your ſelf before him, and knowing that without him you can do nothing, and are nothing: and put your Confidence in him, who never ſuffers thoſe Souls to be con-

How to Pray.

confounded, who truſt in his Mercy, and who will love him at all times, and in every State and Manner that his Divine Majeſty is pleas'd to be loved in. Bleſſed is the Man that believeth, hopeth, and loveth God! Theſe are our Treaſures and every thing beſide is Vanity. Love to God, Charity to our Neighbour, and a Holy Hatred againſt our Vices, vile Senſes and unbridled Paſſions, Humility, Obedience, and Obſervance of Rules; make God over to us, and render him our God.

A ſhort Way to Perfection.

LETTER

Letter XXXIII.

To a Devout Lady.

1. *The Loss and Disadvantages proceeding from Original Sin; and what Man's Righteousness is.* 2. *What Course the Soul must take to Perfection.* 3. *A Description of the Holy Trinity: and how a Sinner frames himself a false Trinity.* 4. *The Mischiefs ensuing thereupon, and how they may be cured.* 5. *How the Image of the Holy Trinity dwells in an upright Soul.* 6. *How necessary a thing Annihilation is, and how it is obtain'd amongst inward Crosses.* 7. *Reason for resigning of our selves unto God, amidst these Crosses.* 8. *A Method how to come to the Knowledge of Truth.* 9. *The Imitation of Jesus Christ, and three sorts of Goods.* 10. *Of Spiritual Pride, Avarice, and Gluttony, and their Cures.* 11. *Six most profitable Spiritual Rules.*

BEcause your Perfection concerns me more than you are aware of; to Day which is the Solemn Festival of the Holy Ghost, I do with bended Knees invoke this most Divine Spirit, who did shed

ſhed the Beams of his Divine Fire over the Apoſtles, to enlighten and enflame my Spirit, that is ſo earneſt to furniſh you with Light and Fire.

The Damage which we ſuſtain'd by Original Sin.

I. Man, as wholly diſtorted, deprav'd and deform'd by Original Sin, and a Number of actual Tranſgreſſions, is become a very miſerable and miſhapen Monſter. And ſo we ſee Senſe and earthly and moſt vile Paſſions to ſwell up in him to Pride, and Haughtineſs as to make War upon Reaſon and Free-Will, his two noble and Spiritual Faculties, and oftentimes to lead them Captives into moſt pitiful Bondage. Reaſon was created to the end it might by its Light govern the inferior Faculties: and it muſt borrow the Light to conduct it ſelf by, from the moſt excellent Law of God, and from the Maxims of Faith. But O how oft does it let it ſelf be drawn away by the Senſes and Paſſions, and Revolts, and turns its back upon the Heavenly Light, and turns a blind Guide to the blinder Will: and ſo both run headlong into a Gulf of Vices! Therefore to cure theſe Miſeries, the Great Son of God was made Man, and by his healing Blood and Paſſion merited for us Sanctifying Grace, the excellent Gift of the Holy Ghoſt, that binds up our bruiſed Nature. Then it is that Man

How Man becomes Righteous.

is said to be seated in Righteousness due to to him when he has by the Force of moral Virtues, reduc'd and conform'd his Passions, Members and Faculties to the strait Rule of Reason, and when he governs them with Prudence and Discretion: so that he becomes a modest, humble, temperate, patient, just, a pious and religious Man, and in brief, in nothing distorted or declining from the strait Mean of Virtue, In the same manner his Spirit suffers it self to be govern'd by Grace, and the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and by the three Theological Virtues the First of which, namely Faith, perfects the Understanding, and the other Two accomplish the Will: as the seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost make the whole Man pliable and obedient to the inward Inspirations of the Holy Spirit, by qualifying him for super-natural Things. Let us therefore consider how a Person should act, that is not defil'd with gross Sins, unrepented for, and that may justly hope, and probably believe that he is in the Favour of God.

Humility *is the First Step to Perfection.*

II. In the First Place such a Person must distrust his own Strength and Industry: and by removing of Pride (which fondly induces Man to put Confidence in himself) should lay a deep Foundation of holy and

and neceſſary Humility: becauſe this profound and fundamental Virtue attracts the kindly Looks of God: which made the Bleſſed Virgin ſay, *He hath regarded the Lowlineſs of his Hand maid.* And the Reaſon of this is, becauſe our Lord God being infinite Truth, it is impoſſible, that he can ever unite with, or love Lying Vanity: for he ſaid of himſelf, *I am the Truth:* and he is the *Word made Fleſh, full of Grace and of Truth: and his holy Law is all Truth,* according to the Prophet. Hence it is, That whilſt a Perſon is not fix'd in Truth, 'tis in vain for him to pretend an Union with God. It is therefore Sanctifying Grace and the Co-operation of our Free-Will that ſettles us in Truth: and Truth becomes the Foundation of all Holineſs. This Truth produces two Effects: for as Light diſpels Darkneſs, and illuminates the Air, ſo Truth chaſes away the Shadows and Darkneſs of Falſhood and Error, and enlightens the Soul.

John 14. & 1. Pſ. 119.

III. The Firſt Shadow that darkens our Soul, and which is the Cauſe of all our Darkneſs or Sin, is the Falſe Eſteem and vain Conceit of our ſelves, which makes us appear in our own Eyes to be ſome valuable thing. And it breeds Pride and Self-Love. And as in the Holy Tri-

Truth diſpels the falſe Opinion of our ſelves.

A Description of the ineffable and blessed Trinity.

nity, the Eternal Father by comprehending with his Understanding, all and entirely his infinite Being, and in it all things created or that possibly can be created, does beget the Word, or Divine Conception, the lively and express Image of the Father, the Brightness of Eternal Glory, Light of Light, and very God of very God. And thus continually and fully beholding his own immense Perfection, and infinite Amiableness; the Father and the Son breath an infinite Love, unanimously and with one only Will: because it is impossible for God not to comprehend and still to behold himself fully: he therefore cannot cease from continually begetting the Word: and it is impossible for him not to love himself, seeing he continually comprehends his own infinite Essence, Beauty, Perfection, and Amiableness. And so the two Persons of the God-head, the Father and the Son by a constant and mutual loving of one another, do breath with one only Will, and love with one only and pure Love, that most lovely infinite Spirit, who is incomprehensible, co-eternal, omnipotent and infinite as the Father and the Son: and this uncreated Love is the Holy Ghost. Thus the indivisible Divine Nature without Multiplication, are Three Persons,

The Unity of the God-head.

Persons, and one only God. One in the Unity of Nature or Substance, or most individual, highly, simple and boundless divine Essence: and Three in the Trinity of Persons: the divine Essence in the Three Persons not being multiplied, but One, and most simple. Therefore as it is in the Case of the most Blessed Trinity: so the Soul on the other side works falsly and frames a counterfeit Trinity, after the manner that I shall explain anon. 'Tis very ordinary for Man when he comes to the Use of Reason (providing he be not prevented by good Education, and much more by the Grace of God) to beget a false Conceit of himself; whereby he inwardly imagines and thinks that he is some considerable Matter in himself, nor does he see his most real Not-Being in himself: while all his Being is from God, in God and for God, and he is a Nothing out of God.

The false Conception, or Word which the Soul produceth of it Self.

IV. But if a Christian sees not his own real and peculiar Nothingness, and entire Dependance on God, this falls out, because the Soul when it first apprehends it self, and produces a Conception of its own Being, makes use of the Knowledge that it derives from the Senses: which see not God; tho' they discern the natural and corporeal Person of a Man: and thus im-

How this Conception is hatch'd, and the Mischief that follows upon it.

mediately Man comes to entertain big Thoughts of himself. And (what is more to be lamented) this Esteem grows to such a Degree, that it degenerates into Pride, a hidden Vice, that comes into the World before all others, and is the last a dying. And if Grace and Faith apply not an Antidote against its Poison (by giving us a deep Knowledge of the entire and infinite Essence of God, and of our own Not-Being in our selves, of our only relative and dependant Being in God) it is impossible to be fully cur'd. And this is the Reason why the Heathen Philosophers, who knew so much, and wrote so soundly of the moral Virtues, could never understand the true and profound Virtue of Humility. From this Opinion which the Soul entertains that it is something, (for every thing that has a Being, is good) springs an Esteem for its own Goodness, and so falls in love with it self. After this manner the false Conceit or Word, which the Soul harbours of it self, breeds that false Self-Love, with which it loves it self in it self, and for it self; and thus do all the Errours and Vices of a blind Soul spring from these Roots. And moreover, the Soul by forming this false Conceit and Idea of its own Being in it self, leaves no room for the Image of God which is

truly

truly in it. Which Image is then discovered in the Soul, when, after being illuminated by Grace, and holy Erudition, it reduces all the Creatures and it self to the Truth of their Nothingness: and with the Light of Faith and Gift of Understanding and Wisdom, is sensible that God alone *Is*, as he made *Job* say, when he cried unto the Lord, *Thou who only art*: and the Lord said unto *Moses*, *I am, that am.* And it knows that God is an infinite, incomprehensible, immense and boundless Being, and in short, that he is God. The Soul likewise knows that Nothing has a Being out of this God; and that the Being of Creatures is a created One; and always depending on the actual Preservation which God vouchsafes it. And that is limited, partial, finite and capable of Annihilation. Such a Knowledge as this is, produces a true Conceit and faithful Esteem of the most adorable God, and of his infinite Essence, and Perfection. And from this most high Conception and Esteem of Him, proceeds our Love towards this infinitely amiable God. A pure love that loves nothing but God: nor any thing out of Him, and loves God only for Himself.

Job. 14. 4. Tu qui solus es. *Vulgat.*

Exod. 3.

How the Righteous Know and Love.

V. But as ſuch a Soul ſeeth not any thing created or that is out of God, but it ſeeth, every thing that it either ſeeth or ought to ſee, in God; ſo it loves nothing as out of God; but every thing, that it ought to love, in God. And this profound Knowing and Loving is not ſenſitive: but Spiritual, and about which the two moſt noble Faculties are employ'd, namely, the Underſtanding and Will, purified, illuminated and inflam'd with Grace, Faith, Charity, and the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, and alſo ſuccour'd by the moral Virtues.

The Reſemblance that a good Soul bears to the Bleſſed Trinity.

And as the Almighty by totally comprehending himſelf, and all the Creatures in him, and knowing nothing to be out of his infinite Being, begets that immenſe Word, to whom he communicates all his divine Nature, and by loving himſelf, and nothing out of himſelf, but all things in himſelf, breaths out that uncreated Love to whom he communicates all his divine Nature: whereby there is one moſt ſimple, indiviſible, only, moſt pure, and infinite divine Nature in Three Perſons; ſo when the Soul is drawn to Perfection by God, it frames, a ſmall but moſt beautiful Image of God. Becauſe that, firſt upon Earth under the Cover and Veil of Faith, and afterwards in Heaven by the clear and open Light of Glory, it knows

the infinite Whole of God in himſelf, and the extream Nothingneſs of the Creatures in themſelves, and their depending and created Being in God. And ſeeing the moſt perfect, and only ſuper-excellent Being of God in himſelf, loves him with an ardent and enflam'd Will; After that our Underſtanding, illuminated by the dusky Light of Faith knows him to be Incomprehenſible. Thus it is, that the Soul and its Mental Conception and Spiritual Love towards God, renew and brighten the glorious Image of God, which was deform'd by Sin. Which Sin is committed, when the Soul forſakes God, and ſets its Inclinations and Affections on the Creatures: and when it admires them for their own ſake, and conſiders it ſelf, who is but a meer Creature, and forms a falſe Idea of it ſelf or of them: and this is the Source of Falſe-Love toward the Creatures.

VI. How well did that Prophet underſtand this Truth, who ſaid, *Behold my ſubſtance is as nothing before thee.* And *Iſaiah, Behold ye are of nothing, and your works of nought.* And in truth ſo it is. God is a Supreme *All* even without the Creatures: and they are a mere nothing without Him. Yet the Soul comes not to comprehend truly the Depth of its own

Pſal. 39.

41. 44.

The Neceſſity of Annihilation, which is attain'd by inward Croſſes.

own Nothingneſs, by Speculative or natural Knowledge alone, for which it is little or nothing the better. But we attain it by the Illuminations of Faith, and the Grace and Gifts of God, and with Croſſes, eſpecially if they be internal. How well did *Jacob da Todi* ſpeak to this Purpoſe, in whoſe rude and unpoliſh'd Songs I meet with more Wiſdom, and lofty Thoughts of God than in all the *Thuſcan* and *Latin* Poets, on which I unluckily employ'd and wore out my Youth, whilſt I was in the World.

No Humane Pow'r, but Heavenly Virtues, crown
The Soul that's ſelf-deny'd and humble grown.

O how much is to be done to attain to this profound experimental Center of our own Nothingneſs! How many Impotences and Failings does our God permit, to inſtruct us in the Practice of Humility! O how many Deſolations, Obſcurities, Doubts, Perplexitites, Scruples, Torments and Temptations, does our indulging Father allow us, to give us a greater Light known by few, that is a thorow Sight of our Ignorances of our Nothingneſs, and of our moſt naked Poverty without him. O if Thoſe who found themſelves in this Condition, would fix themſelves quietly in this their own moſt real Nothingneſs,

and

and caſt their Care entirely upon the All of God, that they would put no Confidence in themſelves, but truſt conſtantly and perfectly in God; How wonderfully would his infinite uncreated Love draw and allure them to it: and make them fly from their own painful nothing to his moſt ſweet and delightful All. But tho' he did not this in this Life, becauſe of the moſt ſecret and deep Reaſons and Decrees of his Wiſdom (for there are many Souls which are kept for the few Moments of Life in their own Nothingneſs after a moſt painful and tormenting Manner) yet he will certainly do it in the other, which is a true, inexhauſtible, boundleſs and eternal Life. O that we would let our God work and act in us according to his good Pleaſure, and that we would not oppoſe him with the Reaſonings and Doubts of our Underſtanding, with our various Deſires and obſtinate Wills; he then would undoubtedly draw us to ſome perfect Reſemblance of himſelf, for which End we were created and redeemed by him.

Reaſons for a perfect Reſignation of our ſelves.

VII. How hard is it to mortifie all our own Judgment, and to dedicate all our Will to God! Albeit the Holy Scriptures ſtill invite us to it, and Reaſon convinces us of it. *Caſt thy burden upon the Lord,* is the *Pſalmiſt*'s Advice to us in reſpect to our Underſtanding, Pſ. 55. 72.

Prov. 23. ſtanding. *Son, give me thy heart,* is enjoin'd us by the Wiſe Man in reference to the Will. And both Faith and Reaſon call to us, *Dedicate your ſelves to God, put your truſt in him, and ſuffer him to bring it to paſs. What good thing is it that Omnipotence cannot perfect in you? Is there any thing that Wiſdom knows not how to accompliſh? What good is there that the Bounty and Love of your moſt Merciful God will not do for you, who is more tender of you, than you can be of your ſelves. But if you underſtand not his ways, and if they ſeem ſtrange and unfathomable, put your confidence in him, and love him; Conſider that he is Supreme Wiſdom, above the reach of Mortals; wherefore 'tis no wonder if his ways be not underſtood by your humane Ignorance. Tell me, vile Souls, can you beneſit your ſelves as much as the omnipotent Father, the wiſe Word, and the Holy Spirit of Love, can, and will do, if you prevent him not?* I pray you let us dedicate our ſelves to God once for all, let us truſt in him, and make it our continual Employment to love him heartily with a pure Love, and to obey his divine Diſpoſals: and let ſo many Diſtruſts and mean Thoughts disband. Whilſt the Soul is inordinately taken up with its own Intereſts, it does not actually love God; and it loſes time, which then is precious

when

when it is imploy'd in loving this moſt amiable God.

VIII. When our Soul looks upon temporal Things from the Windows of the Senſes, O how liable is it to Miſtakes and Prejudices! It ſeeth this corporeal and temporal Being, which appears to be a real One, and loveth it: and here it begins to loſe the Knowledge of right Truth, which is the Foundation of the Soul's true Good. S. *Catherine* of *Siena* taught what it is, and how it might be attain'd to, in theſe Words. *The way to arrive at Perfection is the ſame that the Apoſtles took, who that they might receive the Holy Ghoſt ſhut themſelves up in a Houſe, that is, in the Knowledge of themſelves, where the Soul ought to dwell. And here it findeth another Manſion, that is, the Knowledge of God's goodneſs: ſo that the Soul from the Knowledge of it ſelf, contracts Humility with a holy Hatred and Averſion at the Offences which it has offer'd and does offer to its Creator: and thus attains to true and perfect Patience. In the Knowledge of God which it finds within it ſelf, it acquires the Virtue of moſt ardent Charity: from whence it contracts holy and ardent Deſires: and ſo acquires Watchfulneſs and continual Prayer; that is, whilſt the Soul is ſhut up in ſo charming and glorious a Manſion of the Knowledge of it ſelf and of God: it becomes vigilant*

How to come to the Knowledge of the Truth.

vigilant to that Degree, that the Eye of its Understanding is never seen to close: but must always stand open on its Object, the ineffable Love Christ Jesus crucified. And there it is that it finds Love and its own Sin: for which Christ shed his Blood on the Cross. Then the Soul bestirs it self with a most earnest Affection and Desire to love what God loves and to hate what He hates: and directs and steers all its Actions to God: and does every thing to the praise and glory of his Holy Name. And this is the continual Prayer, of which S. Paul *speaks, Pray without ceasing.*

The Imitation of Jesus Christ.

IX. From what this Saint saith, that the Eye of the Understanding must stand open to behold its unexpressible Object, Christ crucified, you may draw the Necessity of this short Sentence of our Cross, *Conformity to Jesus Christ.* And I design to show you briefly, wherein this Imitation principally consists; by returning afresh to the Thred of my Discourse.

Good is three-fold.

The Soul by seeing of this corporeal and temporal Being, looks upon it to be good, and loves it: and hence flows all its Mischief. Now you must know, that every good thing is represented to us under the Notion of an honourable or delightful Good; and hereto may be added a Profitable Good, which may be call'd Profitable,

Profitable, in as much as it is a proper means for the compaſſing of the other two. Theſe three Goods, when falſly conceiv'd by our Soul, are the Roots of all the Sins in the World, and it was againſt them that our Lord Jeſus level'd all his Life and Paſſion. Toward the clearer Underſtanding of this, S. *John* in one of his Epiſtles ſaid, *For all that is in the world, is the luſt of the Fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of Life.* The Apoſtles Meaning is, That all the good things that offer themſelves to our Notice in this corporeal World, are either repreſented to us as Honourable: and hence ſpring Pride, Vain-Glory, Ambition, Preſumption, and other Sins, which flow from this our airy Honour and vain Reputation, and from the falſe Eſteem of our Being. Or they are repreſented to us as Delightful: and from hence come out all Impurity, Gluttony, and the other Pleaſures of our Senſe and Fleſh, the two ſworn Enemies of our poor Spirit. Or they preſent themſelves to us as Profitable in order to obtain Delights and Honours: and ſuch are Riches, which breed Covetouſneſs, with its Children as miſchievous as the Mother: namely, the Luſt of the Eyes.

1 John 2. 16.

10. But

Spiritual Pride.

X. But what is worſe, is that ſuch Sins are to be met with even among Spiritual Perſons. How much Pride do they often feed! How oft do they entertain a Complacence and Satisfaction of themſelves and of their own Actions! They ſpeak of Spiritual Things with vain Affectation, and make a Shew of their Skill where there is no need of it. They are apt to condemn others, at leaſt in their Heart, when they ſee not theſe Virtues in them, which they ſuppoſe themſelves poſſeſs'd of. They hate to converſe with other Spiritual Perſons who condemn their Mind and Judgment, or their way of walking: and will rather keep company with thoſe who will applaud them. They varniſh and palliate their Failings that they may not loſe the good Opinion, which they challenge and expect from Men, and even from their Spiritual Guide, and they ſometimes tell their grievous Faults to a Stranger, that their Director in ordinary may not know them. They are diſquieted above Meaſure at the ſight of their own Imperfections and Failings, and ſo much the rather, if their Faults are known to others: and they ſometimes in ſuch Caſes fret and turn angry with themſelves. They are very ſparing of Praiſe to others, altho' they love

love dearly to be commended by them. And in one Word, they aim at Perfection, as an Excellence of their own; nay, they are even in this wedded to their own Intereſt, and Lovers of themſelves. It is juſt ſo with Spiritually Gluttonous and Covetous Men, who are full of hankering and hugering Deſires after inward Pleaſures, Lights, and Comforts; nor do they account Prayer effectual, if it be not ſweetned with inward *Manna:* nor are they ſatisfied with Communion, where they taſt not the delicious Honey of Heaven: and they ſtill caſt an Eye back, not only upon their internal Intereſts, but alſo thoſe that are external and coloured with Devotion. Wherefore they are fond of fine Pictures, Books, and other rare and valuable things, and they tie their Affections to the material Part of them, and become Slaves to their worth: all which Imperfections and the like, muſt be overcome by a true Follower of Chriſt. Conſider therefore the infinite Wiſdom, who by making himſelf Man, choſe ſuch a kind of Life and Death, as might utterly ruine and deſtroy theſe three curſed Fortreſſes of Hell. Behold therefore, Dear Daughter, the naked Poverty and low Condition of Chriſt, and you ſhall ſee human Covetouſneſs diſprov'd.

Conſider the painful and ſorrowful Life, and moſt bitter Death of our Redeemer, charged with above five thouſand and thirty Stripes, and you ſhall ſee all the Delights, Delicacies, Conveniences, and Pleaſures of the Body condemn'd. And finally, behold the Reproaches, Deriſions, Infamies, and Affronts, which our incomparably humble Jeſus met with, bore, deſired and loved, and you ſhall ſee all our Pride excommunicated and curſed. So that the Imitation of Chriſt, and the Deſtruction of the Creature's falſe ſenſitive Being, and the Foundation of Holineſs conſiſt principally in theſe three ſorts of Love; namely, *The Love of Poverty, of Sufferings, and of Contempt and Abjection.* When a Soul is faithfully train'd up in theſe ways, how well is it qualified for the laſt Words of our Croſs, namely, *Union with God.*

The Imitation of Jeſus Chriſt in three fundamental kinds of Love.

XI. I will finiſh this very long, tho' perhaps not unprofitable *Letter*, with ſix ſmall Rules of that great Contemplative F. *John Thauler*, and three of them will be of uſe to you for your exterior, and three of them for your interior. 1. *Let your Cloaths and other external Things be ſimple and plain; and deſire to pleaſe none, but God, by them.* 2. *Let your Words be few, down-right, true, and concerning God*

Six excellent Spiritual Rules.

God and Virtue. 3. *Let your outward Deportment be upright in such a degree, that nothing may appear to offend those that behold it.* The internal Rules are these. 1. *Let your Thoughts be pure, heavenly and holy.* 2. *Seek God alone with a pure and upright Intention.* 3. *Keep up a peaceable tranquility of mind in all the Circumstances of your Life.* Tranquility of Mind and not of Sense is here mention'd: because this is not always within our reach and power. And you may find Serenity and Peace of Mind in Mortification, in the Denial of your own Will and Judgment, and in the Union with the Will of God: by continually wishing your self to be, what God would have you to be.

To a Perſon in Affliction.

1. *Purity of Intention in our Actions, and the Peace that accompanies it.* 2. *A Deſcription of the State of eternal Happineſs.* 3. *Rules to prevent the being diſturbed when we are expoſed to Calamities. The Firſt.* 4. *The Second.* 5. *The Third: together with certain Acts of Virtue in Tribulations.* 6. *Acts of Confidence.* 7. *The Exerciſe of pure Love when Sufferings beſet us.*

I. WHAT unexpreſſible Conſolation did I receive from yours! Fear not O my Daughter: Matters go well with you. As for me, I am, (Bleſs'd be God) very well, and carrying on my ordinary Labours for the Glory of my Lord with as great vigour as ever. On whom whilſt I fix the inward Eye of my Soul, and purify by his Grace, my cordial and upright Intention; I am not in the leaſt troubled at what befalls me, or can befall me, nor am I concern'd at what others may talk of me. It is enough for me (as the Apoſtle has it) to enjoy the ſecret Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, which deſires to reſt ſecure in Chriſt.

II. O

II. O my Daughter, we ought amidſt all Storms to raiſe our ſelves above Senſe or Imagination, above the Creatures, and above intellectual Knowledge: and aſcend on the Wings of Faith to our inviſible God; and behold that happy, undiſturbed and unalterable Eternity, towards which our Pilgrim Souls, direct all their Wiſhes, Longings, and Deſires. And by ſo doing, all our tranſitory Afflictions, which try to diſturb us, ſhall vaniſh and diſpel like miſty Clouds. Or if we ſhall ſee one another (as I hope we ſhall) in that bleſs'd *Jeruſalem*, which is our native Country, that City of Peace, that Royal Palace of Glory, and that Kingdom of immortal Bliſs; O how we ſhall ſee the Winter of our Miſeries gone and over, and the Rain of Tears wip'd away, and vaniſhed, Immers'd in this immenſe Ocean of the Deity, we ſhall diſcern the great Nothingneſs of earthly Creatures. Swallow'd up in the Abyſs of that boundleſs Eternity we ſhall diſcover how empty Shadows temporal things were, and be aſtoniſh'd at our own Infidelity, whereby we reckon'd ſo much upon, and were afflicted for tranſitory Evils: and then we ſhall diſcover how unfaithful and lying Meſſengers our Senſes have prov'd, who made us believe that Years were ſome-

A Compariſon between temporal and eternal Things.

thing, when in truth they were but flying Moments, and no real Subſtance. When the Glory of our Lord ſhall overflow all our Soul, and penetrate the Marrow of our glorified Spirit; O how ſhall we then rejoyce that we have born Croſſes for our adored Saviour: and we ſhall be amazed that ſo weighty Glory could be purchas'd with ſo eaſy Sufferings! We ſhall magnify the Bounty of our God, and glorifie his moſt liberal Loving Kindneſs with Joy, that has recompens'd our Moments of Services with the perpetual Eternity of his Heavenly Kingdom. Who can expreſs with what exceeding Extaſies of Aſtoniſhment our Minds ſhall be overwhelm'd, when they behold that unexhauſted, infinite, and moſt beautiful divine Eſſence, who ſhall fill all the Emptineſs of our Underſtanding, with incomprehenſible Fulneſs, and ſhall ſatisfie the Hunger of our enamour'd Soul? O how we ſhall ſee in this uncreated Light of eternal Truth the exceeding Vanity of wretched Creatures! O how we ſhall taſte of that unſpeakable Sweetneſs of divine Bounty, that Savour of eternal Life, in reſpect of which all created Sweetneſs is but Wormwood, Gall and the Bitterneſs of Death! Nay verily, Nay verily, it is the Hope of my Soul; that we ſhall know one another in that tran-

The State of Saints in Heaven.

cending

ſcending glorious Light of the divine Subſtance: and that we ſhall remember one another with exceeding Joy and Gladneſs of Mind; you indeed ſhall remember the Truths, which God has been pleas'd, that I ſhould inſtruct you in, and I the dignifying Honour, which the Lord has vouchſaf'd me, by chuſing me for an Inſtrument of the moſt excellent Work of your Salvation and immortal Glory. O how oft ſhall we admire the orderly and well contriv'd Revolutions of ſupreme Providence, which has, by ways unknown to our dark Underſtanding, perfected in us the work of his Redemption, and compleated his eternal Deſigns, in relation to us his low and moſt vile Creatures! O how ſhall we then conteſt with an holy Emulation to exalt the moſt Loving Bounty of our ſupreme and only Good: and ſolemnly Sing, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, Heaven and Earth are full of the Majeſty of thy Glory!* Amen *and* Amen.

III. In the mean time fear not in the leaſt what befalls you: but lift up the inner View of your Underſtanding from your ſelf and from every thing created, and preſently reſolve to reſt on Faith. Conſider the eternal Decrees of the moſt wiſe and loving Providence of God, which by a wonderful and various

Directions for bearing of Temporal Afflictions.
1. Rule, *To Conſider the eternal Decrees of God's Providence.*

Disposition of Accidents still weaves the Web of your chast Life, until he hath accomplished the Work, and shall have finally plac'd you (as I hope) in his Heavenly Treasures. Majestick and Royal Souls shall stand at the right Hand of their Spouse, Creator, and King of Glory, adorn'd with rich Robes of the Gold of Charity: and shall be royally apparell'd with a marvellous Variety of Virtues, exercis'd on several Occasions. Consider, I say, with the Eye of Faith what God has foreseen and decreed: and let it be your continual Joy, that the Designs of your God are fulfilled by you, in you, and for you, who knows very well how to be glorified by you, the Dear Workmanship of his Divine Hands.

2. *All our Afflictions shall end in a joyful Eternity.*

IV. Dear Daughter, you may consider Eternity to come, toward which we are continually flying: and being thus swallowed up in these infinite Spaces of your endless Duration, you lose sight of these most short, frail, and vain Appearances of what Pain or Pleasure soever happen to you in that, which we call Life, but which is in truth a mere Suspension of Death, and a Banishment from that Life which is immortal.

3. *Consider Christ our Redeemer.*

V. Take sometimes to your Consideration the excellent Heart of your Spouse

Jesus,

Jesus, in which the weighty Treatise of your eternal Happiness was negotiated: and assure your self, that nothing befalls you but what the most inflam'd Heart of your exceeding amiable *Christ* is well acquainted with. In him shall all the Gall and Bitterness of the Crosses you meet with, be made sweet and palatable, your thickest Darkness wherewith you are beset, made bright, and all your Sufferings that threaten you, shall be render'd the most effectual Means of Life. Cry out sometimes with Grief from the very bottom of your desolate Soul, O my chief and only Good, indeed, indeed, I earnestly declare before thee, that the State of Dryness, Darkness and Persecution, in which my Soul is at present, is highly priz'd and esteem'd by me. O my Lord, O King of Glory, how just, righteous and desirable is it, that thou shouldst deal with me, as it sutes best with thy divine Heart! I am not more my own, but thine, by that irreversible Donation and Conveyance of my self to thee both for Time and Eternity, O my Lord, I am willing to live in a total Annihilation, and perfect Forgetfulness of my self; whereby I not only decline to resist or oppose thy divine Disposals, but stand unmov'd, and inwardly peaceable beholding Thee, who by the infinite

infinite Love that thou beareſt to thy ſelf, wilt be glorified in me, and by thy Wiſdom knoweſt how to bring it about, and by thy immenſe Power art able to accompliſh it. O my Lord, The very Thought, that thou diſpoſeſt of me as thou ſeeſt fit, is ſufficient to qualifie and ſweeten the moſt bitter Sorrow, and grievous Adverſity! O Words far ſweeter to me than all imaginable Luſciouſneſs or ſavoury Reliſhes, to be able to ſay, My God, my Creator, my Redeemer, my Good, and my Spouſe is ſatisfied with me, diſpoſeth of me, and delighteth in me! And what is this to a loving Soul; but a Contentment and Joy ſo great and unſpeakable, as is able to make it be raviſh'd with Extaſies of Love in the moſt miſerable Pains and Sorrows? O my God, O how earneſtly and from my Heart does my external Silence ſpeak to thee! and from the depth of my Heart and Center of my enamour'd Spirit ſaith, Moſt amiable God, deal with me freely and as thou ſeeſt meet. Afflict me, Comfort me, humble me, raiſe me, make me poor or rich, undo me, renew me, annihilate in me what does not pleaſe thee: change me what way thou pleaſeſt: for I ſurrender to thee that abſolute Dominion and Power, which thou of right haſt over me. O my God, only

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regard thy own Good-Will and Pleasure: and O Lord do to me accordingly.

Acts of Confidence when we are in Affliction.

VI. Dear Daughter you may thus sometimes exhale and give vent to the intimate Affections of your inflam'd Heart in your Desolations. Be not dismay'd, no no: These Ashes of Afflictions do not extinguish the Fire of Love. That Cloud of Tribulation puts not out the Light of Truth, which shall burn more clearly than ever in the Center of your Soul. Be not dismay'd but raise your self to God by the amorous Flights of Confidence. Above all lift up, as much as possible, the Eye of your Mind and fix it upon God alone, who only has Being, Power and Dominion. Observe these few Words following,

My God, the Pains that I for Thee sustain,
Do Conquests, Glory, and true Honour gain:
Stand therefore firm, My Soul; for Hope and Love,
Patience and Silence, end in Joys above.

The Practice of pure Love in Afflictions, begets Spiritual Peace.

VII. Take Courage and heartily rejoice in Jesus, and fear not. Say to the Lord, O my Jesus, what matters it, what my Condition be, providing I love none but thee? Provided thou be eternally glorious and infinitely blessed, I am content. Dearest Jesus, how glad am I, that I can suffer and not thou! Nay, nay, blessed be thou

thou my Good: for if the *Soul be afflicted where it loves*, that is, when it ſpies any Evil in the thing beloved, I ſee nothing in thee but Glory and immenſe Joy. Why then ſhould I be afflicted: If I ſhould ſorrow in my ſelf, upon my own Account, or for any thing that ſeems evil to me; this were to be fond of my ſelf. But I will not Love my ſelf; no, no more will I be afflicted. 'Tis true, I may be ſenſible of the Afflictions of my Humane Nature, but I will not be griev'd at them, becauſe I love it not. I regard not that which is unpleaſant to me, provided it does not diſpleaſe thee. Yea rather, that which is diſpleaſing to me, yields me mighty Satisfaction, becauſe I am aſſur'd that it is thy good Will and Pleaſure, in that it comes from Thee, who intendeſt every thing for thy conſpicuous Glory and immenſe Satisfaction. Yea, yea, I will love thee alone; and thou only ſhalt be my Delight. I love thee only, O my Spouſe. Be thou only Bleſſed: and then thy moſt unworthy Spouſe is eaſy, peaceable, and Joyful.

Letter XXXIV.

To a Spiritual Person.

1. *The Body loves Pleasure, and thereby falls into Vices.* 2. *And by loving of Pleasure loses the purity of Charity.* 3. *Of Spiritual Pleasure, and how it opens a way for Sins to enter into the Soul.* 4. & 5. *Of the Soul's Faculties, and First of the Understanding.* 6. *The Understanding takes Two Ways to know Things. The First Way and its Defects.* 7. *The Second, and its Dangers.* 8. *Of the Will, and how to destroy the Acts of Wilfulness.*

I. WE can never be transformed into a new Being, until we have first worn out and destroy'd the old: and we cannot live in a perfect Conformity to the new *Adam*, which is *Christ* and his supernatural Life, until we have entirely crucified the old *Adam*, which is our common Course of Living, according to Nature that is vitiated by original Sin, and which even after Baptism continues subjected to Concupiscence, to Self-Love and Interest, and to our own Person. And because Man is made up of Soul and Body, I will here briefly lay down his Condition in *The Condition of Man after Sin.*

in reſpect of both theſe conſtituent Parts. The Body ſtill affects *Pleaſure*, and carefully avoids every thing, that may *diſpleaſe it.* This is all the Philoſophy that our brutiſh Body is capable of. This is its Directory and Rule, by which it ſquares and meaſures all its Paſſions, Appetites, Eſtimates, and Apprehenſions. And I pray you enter into your ſelf, and conſider what is deſir'd or declin'd by your Senſes, and you ſhall find that whatſoever is acceptable to you, is likewiſe deſir'd: tho' what we deſire does very oft prove offenſive. And what is diſagreeable to us, is avoided, tho' many times, things that diſpleaſe us, turn to our ſpecial Advantage. O what a fructifying Root of innumerable Sins is this Pleaſure! Let it therefore be the principal Maxim of thy Mind, to ſay to thy ſelf, *Forſake thy Pleaſure.* By this I underſtand the perfect Mortification of Man's unreaſonable and ungovern'd Appetites, and eſpecially of his inferior Part. For this Account it was that the Saints did ſo ſollicitouſly eſchew every thing that delighted their Senſes. And to mortify themſelves the more, did rather uſe Violence upon themſelves to embrace thoſe things that were diſagreeable to them.

II. It is our Humour to affect thoſe Objects which pleaſe us: and which is worſe,

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we are fond of our ſelves. Pleaſure begets Love: for Love is a Complacence in any Object which the Lover reckons to be good. But when we are pleaſed with a created Object, the Creature is loved: therefore the Love of God does not remain alone, and pure in our Soul. Holy Men who deſire to preſerve their Affection pure and untainted, ſhun that which pleaſes them here below, leſt they ſhould come to love it: and are rather content to embrace that which diſpleaſes them, becauſe it ought not to be loved. By this means they come up to that Degree of Perfection, to reſt ſatisfied and acquieſce in God alone. Beſides, ſeeing they deſire not to pleaſe themſelves: they arrive at another Degree of Perfection, which is to deſire to pleaſe God only: which is inforc'd by the Apoſtle, ſaying, *The world is crucified to me* (therefore no worldly thing pleaſed him) *and I am crucified to the world* (therefore he did not pleaſe, nor made it his Buſineſs to pleaſe the World.)

Pleaſure occaſions Love.

III. But the Soul being united to the Body, does partake of a number of its Conditions (as uſually things that are united, ſhare in the Qualities of one another) and this is the Reaſon why the Soul is alſo fond of *Pleaſure*, and acts the Spiritual Glutton: nay, it affects Pleaſure and avoids

How the Soul loves Pleaſure, and the Faults proceeding from it.

voids Diſſatisfaction even in divine Matters. Alas! how great a Stop and Hindrance is put to its Perfection by this Defect. Becauſe that Perfection conſiſting in a pure, upright and fervent Love to God, and in the Soul's conſidering it ſelf with reſpect to the Satisfaction of God, and not God with reſpect to its Satisfaction, and in the loving of God, becauſe he is God in himſelf, and not indeed on the Account of his being ſweet and delightful to it, from which I draw this Concluſion, that if the Soul be greedy of Sweetneſs and Spiritual Pleaſure, its Love is not upright and pure: but byaſs'd and bended to Self, and its own Pleaſure: and therefore is neither Simple nor Perfect. In like manner Perfection requires us to love the Virtues that conduct us to God, with the ſame pure and untainted Love already ſpecified: therefore to deſire the Virtues that gratify us, and to decline and eſchew theſe whoſe Exerciſe proves diſagreeable to us, is never the way to arrive at true Perfection. Virtue needs no other Quality to recommend it to our Love, Deſire and Practice, but merely becauſe it is real Virtue. It is enough for one that is truly obedient to ſubmit for Obedience ſake; and thus it is in all other Practical Virtues. And we

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need no other Motive for the ſerving, glorifying, exalting and loving of our Lord God, but becauſe he is, what he is, for in that he is God for ever; he is eternally a Supreme Good, Supreme Amiableneſs, and Supreme Glory, incomprehenſible, endleſs and immenſe. It muſt therefore be the moſt induſtrious Study of your Soul to cruſh and defeat your Pleaſure (that is every Affection of your Will to what Pleaſure ſoever) and to purge your Mind ſtill more and more, by purifying your Love. And your Love ſhall be then pure, when you ſhall love true Virtues, without conſidering if they be palatable or not: and you ſhall love your inviſible God by a pure and deep Faith: and ſerve and glorify him without any other Pretence, but merely of ſerving his adorable Majeſty, of glorifying his excellent Holineſs, and of loving his unſpeakable Amiableneſs.

Of the Faculties of the Soul, and their Ends.

IV. But if we will conſider the Soul by it ſelf, and as a Spirit: it has two Faculties, the Underſtanding and Will. The Firſt has Truth for its Object and End; and the Second has Good. But here lies the Miſchief, that both theſe Faculties are too oft miſtaken: and the Underſtanding accounts that to be true which is not, but what it takes to be ſo

upon the Report of the Senſes: and the Will deſires that as a true Good; which is but an apparent one, and which proves a real Evil to the heedleſs Soul, betray'd into Errour by its Body. Thou muſt therefore addreſs thy Underſtanding in theſe Words, *Deſtroy thy Opinion, and to thy* Will, *Deſtroy thy deſiring.*

Of the Underſtanding of Men and Angels.

V. For the Underſtanding of theſe profound Maxims of Truth, you muſt know, that our Underſtanding was not created by God with the ſame Perfection, with which his Divine Majeſty did create Angelical Intelligences. Theſe incorporeal Spirits and moſt noble Natures, were by God created wiſe, and their Notices of things are con-natural to them, and innate: nor do they need, in order to underſtand, to look upon the Creatures and Objects, and thus to glean their Learning by little and little: But as if God ſhould create a *Peacock* in an Inſtant as a perfect Bird; it ſhould in an Inſtant be a- with a Plumage of various and beautiful Colours: but if a *Painter* were to draw one, he is to conſider the *Peacock* and take the Idea of it, and piecemeal to paint it and to do it to the Life. Thus the Mind of Angels was made perfect and wiſe in the very Moment of their Creation, neither had they need to bor-

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row their Knowledge from created Objects. But the Understanding of Man was created naked and destitute of all Knowledge, like Canvas on which no Colours have been laid; and therefore is oblig'd to beg its Knowledge from the Senses; as the Senses take theirs from Objects. One who has never seen and *Ichneumon* alive, nor painted, nor described in any Book, nor yet heard it described, can form no kind of Conception of it in his Understanding, nor yet of any other unknown thing. But if any Animal present it self to any of our Senses: then the Understanding can produce a general Notion of it.

VI. Our Understanding comes at its Knowledge Two manner of Ways, either by stooping to corporeal things, and to the Dictates and Inclinations of the Senses: and in this Case its View is called the inferior View: because this noble Faculty regards things that are lower than it self, and such are all corporeal things. Or it knows by making use of the Instructions of Catholick Faith, and of the Holy Scriptures, and by being illuminated inwardly by divine Grace, by inspir'd Grace, and by the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, belonging to the Intellective Faculty, and they are Four in number, Wisdom, Understanding,

Two Ways of understanding Things.

Counſel and Science. In this Caſe the Underſtanding which is enlighten'd with ſuch Inſtructions and Light, and which turns back its Eyes upon Objects inviſible and eternal, is call'd *Intellect*, or the ſuperior View and Proſpect of the Underſtanding: From this it is that all the Goods of our Soul draw their Original, which is ordinarily guided by the Underſtanding in its Effects. As on the other hand when it uſeth the inferior Eye directed to earthly Rules; I cannot expreſs, to how many Errours it is liable. We ſhall always be oblig'd to tell it, *Deſtroy thy Opinion.* Beſide that the Devil, who as a Spirit can penetrate all our corporeal Faculties, moves the Fancy and excites Fantaſms therein, and makes a thouſand Counterfeit Things appear to the Underſtanding as if they were moſt true. And moves the Paſſions of the Heart, as Fears, Sadneſs, Deſpair, Love, Concupiſcence, vain Mirth, or Anger and Boldneſs, and the reſt: and theſe things being preſented to the Underſtanding, it believes them, and the Soul takes them for ſuch, as Senſe feels them to be. But it is miſtaken, and we muſt again tell it, *Deſtroy thy Opinion.* From hence it appears how dangerous and fallacious a thing it is to believes ones ſelf, and eſpecially when the Perſon is tempted

tempted and transported with Passion; and hence we may also learn the Necessity that we have Persons of an even Temper, taught and illuminated by God, to direct us: and of the great Obligation that we lie under to trust more to them than to our own *Opinion.* Thus also is it evident how good a Thing it is to submit our Judgment to good Superiors, who see the general Good, and are for the most part better inform'd than Subjects are. For these regard a particular Good, or their own, or are not perhaps well inform'd: therefore their Judgment should endeavour to attain to the *Destroying of their own Opinion.*

VII. The other View of the Understanding is the Superior, and it is when it beholdeth eternal Things, and the Virtues, and takes its Rules and Measures from the Dictates of Faith, of the Holy Scriptures, and especially from the sacred Gospel of our dearest Jesus. If Christ our Lord saith, *Blessed are the poor*; why should our Understanding esteem the Rich happy? If Christ saith *Blessed are the meek*; why does the Understanding seek Reasons in its own Favours to nourish Anger, Discord, and bitter Envy against its Neighbours? If Christ saith *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake*, and

when men revile them for God's ſake, why does the Underſtanding harbour ſo many fears, and human Reſpects, and why ſo much boggling at Injuries, Calumnies and Afflictions? Do you now perceive, Dear Daughter, how few Underſtandings there are endow'd with the lively and practical Principles of the Goſpel; and on the other ſide, to how many Underſtandings grounded on the falſe Principles of the World, may it be ſaid *Forego your Opinion.*

Prudence is neceſſary.

But Underſtandings, that proceed upon the ſuperior View and Intention, and upon the Maxims of Virtue, may alſo in ſome Caſes be advertis'd to *Forego their Opinion:* becauſe they ſometimes miſtake the leſſer Good, and the more groſs and apparent Virtue for the greater Good, and more ſolid Virtue: altho' it be certain that Spiritual and internal Virtues are far more perfect, than theſe that are external and viſible: therefore Obedience is more perfect than Abſtinence, *&c.* another while they take it for a Good to practiſe a Virtue at a Time when it is not expedient, and when it is fit that ſome other Virtue ſhould be ſubſtitute in its room: as if one ſhould be ſilent, when it were far better to ſpeak well, or if he ſhould ſpeak well when he had better be ſilent. As if one would correct, when there is no room

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for it, at an unconvenient time, and when the Perſon is not ſuſceptible of it: or as if one ſhould obey when what is Commanded, claſhes with the Divine Precepts: or to be ſilent and humble, when Submiſſion would render him more proud and arrogant, and ſo in other Caſes. Are you not by this time ſenſible that the ſuperior Underſtanding, muſt needs upon Occaſions *Forego its Opinion?* And when we are at Prayer, O how often do Aridities, Pains, and Darkneſs appear not to be Good: altho' they bring the moſt valuable Advantages to the Soul! When in the mean time Lights, Taſts, and Senſations appear Good, tho' they ſometimes prove to be Nets wherein it is entangled, and ſtop'd that it advances no further towards that God who is inviſible, and cannot be felt by Senſe, but altogether Lovely. *Therefore forego thy Opinion.*

VIII. The Will in the next Place, which is a Faculty abſolutely blind; follows the Conduct of the Underſtanding, and is ſometimes forcibly drawn away by the Paſſions, which affect what thing ſoever is pleaſant to them. But if we muſt be continually a ſuggeſting and dictating to our Senſe, *Forego thy Pleaſure*, and to our Underſtanding, *Forego thy Opinion*; who is there that does not clearly perceive, that

The Will muſt deſtroy its Selfiſh Inclinations.

it is likewiſe needful to warn the Will to *Forego its Willing?* We can never ſin without our own Aſſent: he therefore who could abſolutely ſuperſede his Aſſent, and for ever abandon it; ſhould be for ever impeccable. *Pleaſure* and *Opinion* are the Roots of the Evil of Sin: but they are not Sins until they be married with the Will. How fearful a Thing is this our own Will! Every Act of our own Will does either purchaſe Hell or Repentance. *Forego* therefore *thy Will.* Let the Will of God only abide in you, which is Goodneſs. His Opinion which is Wiſdom, and his Pleaſure which is Righteouſneſs and Holineſs.

You may have a Senſe of your Fears but dread them not. Write to me about them, but be not apprehenſive of them. Your Dereliction is the Fore-runner of your Union. God deprives you of the Little that you have that he may give you what is infinitely Greater, namely himſelf. Fear not, and ſtand faſt. Warn *N.* to improve the Acts of Virtues that they may be render'd more intenſe and effectual, and that ſhe may acquire a good Habit of them. Let theſe Acts be internal, pure, eaſy and unconſtrain'd, voluntary, peaceable, and efficacious, and eſpecially ardent and affectionate.

LETTER XXXIV.

To a Young Proficient.

Of the Nativity of our Saviour, and the Presence of God.

O how heartily do I wish, and would be glad that the Babe *Jesus*, who was born in such chilling Frosts of Winter as these are, should become the only Mirrour, in which your Soul might behold it self. If you did but accustom your self to look on him frequently, how could it be possible, that you, seeing the low and humble Condition of him, who was very God, should any more have a liking for the Vanities of this World? Consider to what extream Poverty the Creator of the whole World submitted and humbled himself: and you shall perceive the Madness of those who make great Account of their Interest and boggle at nothing so much as Poverty. Observe how much his tender Body endur'd, and learn also not to be over-nice in Delicacies, and to be denied to Relishes and Delights of Taste and of the other Senses: for they are the actual Ruin of Souls. Consider in how poor a Stable and vile a Manger this

The Imitation of the Babe Jesus.

His Poverty.

this Monarch who is greater than the Heavens, was laid: and be you alſo in love with your Cloiſter: and be not an idle Wanderer there, but modeſt and retir'd, and an Enemy to idle Talking, and no Frequenter of the Grates: for theſe things deſtroy true and hearty Devotion.

Obedience. Reflect on the ſtrict Obedience which your Redeemer, tho' omnipotent paid to his Mother. O Heavenly Babe, how patiently didſt thou let thy Mother take thee up and lay thee down, put thee in thy Swaddling Cloaths, and looſe thee again! With what Facility did ſhe dandle thee! If ſhe embraces thee, thou lieſt cheerful and contented in her Boſom; If ſhe lays thee in the Manger, thou reſteſt peaceably there; If ſhe gives thee the Breaſt, thou ſuckeſt of her chaſt and heavenly Milk; If ſhe lets thee want Meat, thou calmly beareſt Abſtinence and Faſting; If ſhe carries thee along with her, thou ſuffereſt thy ſelf to be carried; If ſhe place the betwixt two Beaſts, thou ſtayeſt there cloſe and without ſtirring. What a wonderful Pattern of Obedience is Chriſt! It is not with thee, O my Dear Jeſus, as with other Babes, who bear with ſuch Uſage on the Account of their Inability of reſiſting it: for thy *Name is omnipotent.*

Exod. 15.

But the Sovereign Obedience, that reign'd

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in thy Heart began to ſhine early in thee; and gain'd ſuch a mighty and powerful Aſcendant upon thee, as to draw thee at laſt to die painfully on the Croſs.

II. When, I pray you, when ſhall it be that you will read theſe heavenly Inſtructions more with your Mind than with your Eyes, and when will you put them in practice? You muſt needs from henceforth reſolve upon it, and vigorouſly begin to vanquiſh and ſubdue your Paſſions, and extirpate your Sins. When you come to be tranſported with Anger, becauſe you are reprov'd; bethink your ſelf a little, and ſay in your own Heart, the little Babe *Jeſus*, would he have been mov'd at this? Did he ever give his Mother an irreverent Anſwer? When Obſtinacy and a Backwardneſs to obey, happen to aſſault you, ſay in your Heart, Would my Dear *Jeſus* have done thus? Did he ever reſiſt or gain-ſay, was he ever ſlow, or did he ever murmur or repine, when he was rul'd or admoniſh'd by his Mother? If Pride, Vanity and the Delights of the World ſtrike your Fancy, ſay in your Heart, would the little Babe *Jeſus* admit of, or deſire ſuch Trifles as theſe? And in ſhort, as oft as you fall into any Sin, look upon your Divine Mirrour. And in the Virtuous Works of Prayer

The Practical Imitation of Jeſus Chriſt.

Prayer or Praiſe, or the other Affairs of your Solitary Life, think conſtantly how *Jeſus* would perform them, and endeavour to imitate him. But if you diſcover that you have not reſembled him in your Actions, yet do not immediately thereupon ſink into Deſpair or Diffidence: be you humbled and penitent, and purpoſe to amend: and I hope that your Soul by viewing it ſelf in Jeſus Chriſt, ſhall be adorn'd with ſo ſplendid Beauty, as to be worthy of being made a Spouſe of Jeſus Chriſt.

The Preſence of God in every Thing.

III. I muſt likewiſe anſwer your Requeſt, wherein you expreſs a Deſire which moves you to beg of me, that I would diſcourſe upon the Preſence of God: which I will perform with Brevity and Perſpicuity.

If your Mind ſhould feign a City, tell me, I pray you, *Would not your Mind be preſent with the leaſt particle of it?* Queſtionleſs it would; becauſe that City ſhould ſo much partake of *Being*, as your Mind gave it by figuring and repreſenting of it. And if you would fancy to your ſelf a Square, your Thought that repreſents and figures it, muſt needs be in every part of that Square. But if you ſhould only figure to your ſelf the Fronts of the Palaces; theſe only ſhould exiſt.

And

And if you had a Mind that they ſhould have Chambers, Cellars, Vaults and Wells, you muſt needs be in all theſe Places, when you draw their Shadow and imaginary Model with Thought. But if your figuring Mind ceas'd to be in a Place; that Place ſhould alſo ceaſe to be. And if you had a Mind to repreſent that City as peopled, you muſt needs fancy all the Men and Women whom you would have to be there. And were it your Will that theſe Men ſhould alſo have their Outſide, a Brain, a Heart, and other inward Parts, your Thought is oblig'd to be within them, and to frame every Thing. And if you would fancy them to be ſpeaking, or walking, their Words and Motion depend on you, to give them any imaginary Being that you pleaſe.

IV. Now from this Similitude you may draw the Peſence of God in all things: for *all things* (according to the Apoſtle) *are in God, move and live in him*, and there is nothing to be found that is not in God. He gives Being and Power to every Thing. Nor did he only give the firſt Being, but he alſo preſerves it every Moment: which makes a perpetual Production and Continuation of the firſt Creation of all Creatures. And if he ſhould ceaſe

Acts 17. God *is in every Creature by his Preſence, Power and Eſſence.*

ceaſe for one Inſtant of Time to preſerve any Creature; it ſhould immediately turn to Nothing. The Bleſſed Virgin herſelf and the human Nature of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt it ſelf ſhould become a pure Nothing, if the Deity did not preſerve them in Being. Therefore God as he is Creator and Preſerver, is the firſt Cauſe, the firſt Mover, the firſt Life, and the firſt Influencer and Ruler of all things, by his Eſſence, by his Preſence and by his Power. He is in every thing by *his Power:* becauſe he is able to preſerve, change, unmake and renew all Things, and can work in every Thing after the manner that he pleaſes: and from it are all created Powers deriv'd; which are a Nothing if compar'd with the firſt uncreated Power. He is in all things by his *Preſence:* becauſe all things are preſent to the infinite Eye of his incomprehenſible Wiſdom, which penetrates all things. And he is in all things by his *Eſſence:* becauſe ſeeing the Being of God is infinite, it is not only in this or that particular Place, but in all Places, and above them all, and is not contain'd by any Place: but penetrates, fills, creates, preſerves, contains, comprehends, and infinitely and without Bounds or Limits tranſcends all Places. And this divine Eſſence is the

firſt

firſt Cauſe that creates and preſerves all created Eſſences and Beings: it is therefore in all Things, and all things are in it, and nothing is, or can be without it.

V. And this is an Anſwer to the Point of the Preſence of God. I therefore add, that God dwells in good Souls by Grace, that is, by communicating Grace to them, which is a ſupernatural Participation of the very divine Eſſence: as the Sun is in a Glaſs by communicating a marvellous Diffuſion and Participation of its Light and Qualities, which it does not in a Stone.

God is intimately preſent with the Juſt.

VI. How we are in this Divine Preſence, muſt needs be ask'd at Angels and they will inform you, and not I who am a wretched and ignorant Sinner. They continually ſtand in the Preſence of God with a moſt reſpectful Reverence, with a moſt lowly Obedience, with exceeding Aſſiduouſneſs, with the greateſt Humility, with moſt fervent Love, and by giving perpetual Glory to their moſt preſent and intimate God. Take theſe few words into your due Conſideration, and put them in practice in every Place, at every Time, and in every Action: becauſe God who is immenſe, is in every Place, the Eternal is in

in every Instant of Time, and the Omnipotent is in every Action. Beware therefore of imaginary Shadows and Similitudes, for God cannot be shadow'd, nor is he capable of any Form or Shape: but go on believing with your Understanding tho' you see not; and more especially by Loving it: Charity that unites you to God, who is incomprehensible Charity. What Treasure is it that is within you? Is the Whole of God, Three and One there, and yet will you never regard him? And will you never love him? O my God, what Wonder! My God, what amazing Wonder!

Fest 20th *December*, 1673.

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